

FIRST PUBLICATION

BEWARE!

by Edgar Rice Burroughs



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39
BULLETIN



NUMBER 33 (New Series)

WINTER, 1990

CONTENTS

REWARDS¹ by John Tyler McColloch (Edgar Rice Burroughs)

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"We think the reader of this book on *Edgar Rice Burroughs* will find it a gem."

Charles H. Hays, 1939-1974

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

KACH, BURROUGHS, MELKOPHILES

BEWARE! was the thirteenth story from the pen of Edgar Rice Burroughs, so instead of merely describing it, we decided to reprint a wide new artwork. Our front cover is a present of Burroughs done by J. Allen St. John, an commission from Stan Yungis, a great Burroughs fan and former Assistant Editor of the **BURROUGHS BULLETIN**. Our back cover is by Jeff Jones from last summer's 1998 ERB Calendar published by Mike Friedlander of Philadelphia. Copies may still be ordered direct from the publisher by calling (412) 454-8100. This is a piece of ERB art which should not be missed.

BEWARE! was written from August 9-11, 1912, with a prologue devoted to a resolution and strategy in the small kingdom of Ananra, and the escape of the infant heir apparent, Prince Alexander. The story itself unfolds twenty-two years later in New York City after the Prince has grown to maturity, ignorant of his true identity. Indeed, Burroughs leaves the reader in suspense regarding the hero's identity: is he really the King's son or is he the son of Laramaur, Donatour of the New York City police? Only his mother can answer that question, and she lies in a coma at the story's end.

The story contains 14000 words and ERB submitted it to his editor under a non-de-plume on September 12, 1912. It was rejected by editor Bob Davis with the words "I think **BEWARE!** is the wrong approach to melodrama that ever came from your pen." Seventy-one years later, ERB fans are still trying to decide if Davis was right.

For sixteen years, ERB tried other publishers with the same result. rejection slips came from **SLYT BOOK**, **DETECTIVE TALES** and **WEIRD TALES** to equal success. **WEIRD TALES** made him no offer of \$100 in 1928, but he turned it down. The last rejection slip came from **DETECTIVE BOOK** in 1934. But in 1936, Ray Palmer bought it for \$100 for **FANTASTIC ADVENTURES**, changing the plot considerably, and the tale found, to our surprise, it into a hit: a success fiction gem of the year 1936 A.D. Under its new title "Scramble Rivalry," it was published in the July, 1939 issue of **FANTASTIC ADVENTURES** with four-line drawings by Julius Krupp.

The original story, as ERB wrote it, remained unpublished until July, 1974 when editor Vernell Goodall gave it its world premiere in **BURROUGHS BULLETIN #99** with two new drawings by Richard Corben. With this current reprint twenty-four years later, we had planned to commission all new artwork, including color covers, but the plan collapsed at the last moment, so we used period drawings from the early part of the century from such publications as **NEARLYNCH MAGAZINE**, **PALL MALL MAGAZINE**, **CASSELL MAGAZINE** and **TWELVE OF A CENTURY** by Edwin Hilder.

ERBON will honor *The Road to Hell's Bend* along with several upcoming articles and books which have been stockpiling since the turn of the 20th year. Until then...cheer!

George T. McWhorter
"Co-Editor"



NOTE:

on the last page is a photo of
Alfred Russel Wallace which is
from March 19, 1978

BEWARE!

by
John Tyler McCulloch
(Edgar Rice Burroughs)



"the subtle - drunk with liquor and with blood
lust - marched upon the palace."

and foot, had marched upon the palace with the avowed intention of assassinating the imperial family.

All that day they had howled and hoaxed about the palace, held in check only by a single military unit which had remained loyal to the Emperor - the Poosang Corps, recruited among foreigners and - with few exceptions - similarly officered.

At dawn, the railing of glass upon the study floor behind the Emperor, torn at the initial every design led in the hall, crashed onto the parking. A hailstorm of shots from the palace grounds. The steady roar of the visible, pierced by shrieks and screams of pain and rage. The Emperor turned and surveyed the peril steadily. "My great grandsons brought this from Pagan over a hundred years ago, Sempowaka. So that the works of man, back to their earth again, return and holy things look like a dream."

As the Emperor spoke his companions had crossed the room quickly. "Come, sire!" he cried. "we must leave this apartment. This place was intended for you."

The Emperor shook his head sadly. "But for His Majesty, I could have wished the fellow had been a better marksmen," he said.

"And the Queen, Prince Alexander," Sempowaka reminded him.

"It might make it easier for him," replied the Emperor. "It is not they here. My people love me. Sempowaka - my people whom I love and in whom I have used to be a father. But them I cannot blame. They have been deceived by him. It is toward those who know the weak, who love closest to me, and for whom I did the most that I lost my bananas. Every day they are deserting me, Sempowaka. the men and

the sinking ship. I am sure of only a few of you. I could count my friends amongst upon the fingers of one hand."

Prince Michael Semenovitch, Minister of War, bowed his head, for the Emperor had spoken the truth and there was no denial to be made. After a moment's silence, the Emperor spoke again.

"What do you suppose started these riots?" he asked. "What brings this mob on the palace?"

They bowed his majesty on the brink of the Crown Prince Alexander to His Majesty. replied Semenovitch. They pretended to see in that fact a menace to what they are pleased to call The Republic: that is why they are here, sire."

"You think they want the lives of the Emperor and the Crown Prince, as well as my life?" demanded the Emperor.

Semenovitch bowed. "I am sure of it, sire," he replied.

"That must be prevented at all cost," said the Emperor.

"I had thought of removing them from the palace," replied Semenovitch. "but that would be difficult, even were it possible to move His Majesty, which the physicians assure me is impossible at this time; but there is just a bare possibility that we may be able to remove the Crown Prince Alexander. I have given the matter a great deal of thought, sire, for I have apprehended just such a contingency as that which has arisen. I have a plan. It is a little risky, but on the other hand, to permit the Crown Prince to remain in the palace another twelve hours would, I am confident, prove fatal."

"Your plan, Semenovitch, what is it?" demanded the Emperor.

"For the past month the officers of the Foreign Corps have been quartered within the palace. Several of them are married men, and their wives are here with them. One of these women, the wife of a Baron Demovitch, gave birth to a son two days since. She is a strong and healthy young woman and could be moved without materially endangering her health. For all the rabble know, she may have had twins."

The Emperor frowned but bowed. "I see," he said, "but how could the babe get with the infant? We are all virtually prisoners here. No one may escape."

"But they do daily, sire," replied Semenovitch. "The palace is filled with women. Not a day goes by but that several dozen go to the quay. We are alone passed. Only a minute can save The Foreign Corps from shooting extrajudicially. It would not seem strange, then, to the revolutionaries, should Baron Demovitch desert to them, for the sake of the safety of his wife and children."

For several minutes the Emperor stood with bowed head, busied in thought. The yells of the rabble rose and fell weakly, but at a greater distance

passed into the ranks of the mob in reply to the fact that had cheered the workers in the Emperor's study. The irregularity of the firing now suggested the activity of insurgents, rather than a concerted attack by any considerable body of men. But back the Emperor and Semenovitch passed that the mob had been withdrawn temporarily, and that when they returned the assault it would be with increased numbers and redoubled fury. Sooner or later the loyal gendarmes must fall, and if ought was to be done to save the Crown Prince it must be done at once.

"Call Dravoff," said the Emperor, "and we will need for the Baron Demovitch."

"Perhaps I had better go myself," said Semenovitch. "The fewer who know of what we intend, the safer will be the return of Prince Alexander."

"I have implicit confidence in Dravoff," replied the Emperor. "He has served me faithfully for many years."

"Fardon, sire," said Semenovitch, "but the situation is one of such tremendous importance to the dynasty that I would be untrue to the trust you repose in me were I to remain silent. Sire, I fear Dravoff, I mistrust him, I have no confidence in



"Fardon, sire," said Semenovitch. "But I fear Dravoff. I mistrust him."

him."

"Why?" demanded the Emperor.

"I could not make any charge against him," replied Senapevski, "for I should have preferred charges long ago, yet in my heart of hearts I believe him guilty!"

"Fool!" exclaimed the Emperor. "Droeff would die for me. Summon him, please!"

Senapevski turned toward the bell clerk, but with his hand upon it he turned again toward the Emperor. "I beg of you, sire, to let me go instead."

The emperor replied with an imperious gesture toward the bell clerk, and Senapevski, bowing, retired. A few moments later, Paul Droeff, the Emperor's valet, entered the chamber, looking conspicuously like a soldier: dark coat, apparently in his early thirties. His eyes were large and dreamy and an arch smile upon his face, while, as marked features of face, were his thin, aquiline nose and his straight and bloodless lips. He seemed to ignore the will of his master, who stood scrutinizing him closely, as though for the first time he had seen the face of the man before him. Presently, however, the Emperor spoke.

"Droeff," he said, "you have served me faithfully for many years. I have implicit confidence in your loyalty, and because of that I am going to place within your hands weights the heaviest of America and the safety of the dynasty."

The man bowed low. "My life is yours to command, Your Majesty," he replied.

"Good. The death ends our life and that of Her Majesty, the Empress, and of the Crown Prince Alexander. Even if I could leave the palace I should not leave Her Majesty, on account of her weakness, hence, for Prince Michael believes that we can smuggle the Crown Prince away where he may remain in safety and isolation until my peace-deluded people have recovered from the madness which grips them now."

Prince Michael Senapevski, watching intently the face of the valet, now reflected there no emotion which might arouse the slightest suspicion as the emperor outlined the plan which might cheat the revolutionists of the fruit of their endeavor.

Twenty minutes later Droeff returned with Lieutenant Terrance Desnoes, a young Irish soldier of fortune who had been a Lieutenant in the Foreign Corps for better than a year.

As the emperor's command, Prince Michael explained the plan to the officer.

"The most difficult part," he concluded, "will be in obtaining safe escort for your wife and the two infants through the drunken rabble that surrounds the palace, but that is a chance that we must take, for in their present mood the mob will spare no one once it has gained access to the palace, which now can be but a matter of hours. Once you have gained the city streets at night and if your wife's strength is equal to travel, then leave the country. Go to America where safety will be sure, you periodically for the care and education of the Crown Prince. Every time to take you will receive instructions from us, but you will make no reports unless requested: no attempt in any way to communicate with us, for only by maintaining the strictest secrecy may we hope to preserve the Crown Prince from the vengeance of the revolutionists. To prevent suspicion from attaching to you in any way upon the other side you must permit some fiction that may at least partially account for your absence. Her Majesty, the Empress, Droeff, your wife, yourself and I are the only people who will know the identity of your second twin. No other man may know and you receive no further word from America than the letter is apt for his return to his people. Not even the Crown Prince himself must know that he is other than, your son. Do you understand fully and do you accept the mission?"

Desnoes raised his hand in assent.

"We are placing in your hands the fate of America," said the Emperor. "God grant that you may be true to the trust imposed upon you."

"I shall not fail you, Majesty," it pled the Irishman.

Twenty-four hours later the rabble overcame the remaining guards and forced its way into the palace. The fate of the emperor and his empress is not known: their bodies were never found. The rage of the revolutionists when they discovered that the unborn prince had been spirited away was unbounded. But all that is history. If you are interested in it I recommend to you *The Last Days of the Dynasty* by Prince Michael Senapevski, large thin, illus., 327 pgs.—G. Barker Ltd., London.



"A tiny, modified figure with a weight at its feet slipped over the side of the lower Galileo."

(19)

Chapter I

Your Ma is a very rich woman, Michael. The older man, sitting at his desk, did not move his eyes to his son as he spoke; and the other knew that it was because he feared to reveal the reasons that lay behind them, and that gave the boy greater cause for apprehension.

I guessed as much when I got your message, Dad," and so he spoke. Michael's Daanman arose and, walking to his father's side, laid his hand affectionately and sympathetically upon the broad shoulder of the police lieutenant. "May I see her?" he asked.

"That is all, Michael—just see her," replied his father. "She will not know you. We must be very quiet. The doctor has ordered absolute quiet."

The younger man nodded, and together they slipped their way upstairs to a room on the second floor.

When they entered in the door again there was a hint of movement on the faces of both men.

"How did you find me," asked the younger man, "through the department?"

"Yes. I telephoned Washington. You chief told me where you were."

"I am still on the Thorne case. It has got us going. No one in the department believes in Thorne as far more than a visionary philanthropist with conservative moderate leanings. He wants to do good with his money, but doesn't know how. At first we thought the Reds had gotten hold of him, but the more we investigate the less sure we

are about it. We haven't been able to identify a single avowed radical with him, yet we are more than three to a bunch of Americans with whom he has frequent dealings, often secretly. His aim is as much mystified as we, and deeply injured. You know it was he who reported the matter to the department. He thinks they are after the old man's money, and fears that they may influence him to finance some movement that will be harmful to Federal prosecution."

"Twenty-two Years Later"

But there's another angle to the whole case—something we haven't stated yet, even faintly, but I'm going to get it. I think I'm close to it now than I have been at any time during the past month that I've been on the case. We came down from their summer place yesterday on Mr. Thorne's yacht and things seem to have unfolded up some way from the entrance we got into his town house. There is a sort of museum and an of mystery that wasn't manifest at 'Thorn Gables.' Above the only new element that seems to have been introduced into the affair is Thorne's brother, a fellow named Guerin, who was not at Thorn Gables. None of the rest of the town seems to know much about that can see, but the fellow Guerin I don't like. He's always pussy-footing. I can scarcely turn around without feeling him behind me. I think he suspects me and is watching me accordingly. The other guests beside myself are Mrs. Glanville and her daughter—the Pauline Glanville of Philadelphia, you know—and Count Serenow and his daughter. As far as the Glanvilles are concerned they are out of my reckoning.

careless— might as well connect young Roosevelt or Joe Cannon with Red activities as a *Glascock of Philadelphia*— but the Samsons are different. They're from Arizona. He's supposed to be a political outfit. I haven't a thing on him, but the kid likes to be the same feller with Quercy. The girl, his daughter, is all right— very much all right, plus."

Louise's Terrence Donovan looked up quickly at her son and smiled. The latter grinned back at the older man, and flashed a grin.

"Don't be too sure about anybody, Mucker," remarked the father. "The best friend I had when I was walking" had tried to stab me in the back one night when we were naked" a partner in the old Tenderloin. And, damn that, are you sure about young Thiers?"

"He was the best friend I had in Harvard," replied the son. "He asked to have me engaged in this case because he said I could work together better than strangers. He has done everything to aid me. Not a soul in the house knows who I really am. There was about a year he was longer than my father at a police lieutenant, for that it might arouse suspicion as to my motives for being there. They thank you in a mixed up way from San Francisco and this we're busy with money. Say, if Mrs. Prebody Glascock of Philadelphia knew the truth she'd throw a convulsion."

The older man's face softened reflectively. "I'll say she would," he said, "if she knew the truth."

"Well, Dad, and the boy's saying, 'I've got to go this is the ball of a job like mine, and you're not our personal interests matter'— even. Raping's Tommy has nothing on us."

"You sure I got to finish what comes off the Queen?"

"You sure I got to finish father's money when comes?"

"If you want to see your brother, take me work your business good."

He threw an arm about his father's shoulder affectionately. "Back up, Dad," he said. "I'm sure Mucker'll pull through all right. Keep me posted, and if I can see her when she's convenient, why well, to Hell with the Queen. I'll come."



Mucker Donovan—
a smart inside agent
was working on the Thiers case

As he walked down the street he nodded pleasantly to the policeman at the corner who was guarding one end of the block that had been roped off against traffic to insure quiet for the mob women lying unconscious on the second floor of the Donovan house. The cross street was covered with a layer of wet bark and as he felt a soft breeze he rubbed over a realization of the reason for its being there brought a lump to his throat. "Mucker!" he murmured and then, shaking himself, stopped briefly to a waiting taxi at the opposite end and was driven rapidly north toward an alley past the city.

The cab stopped at last, in front of a tall brown stone house— one of several identical houses on a business-looking block of them. Once upon a time each of them had housed a

famely of fashion and wealth, and even now some of the old women congregated in a few of them, men who, like Martin B. Thorne, had been born there. As Macklin, Donovan, remarked the steps the door was opened by a footman, just beyond whom Donovan saw Gower, who bowed low, much too low the Secret Service man thought - as he stepped forward to take the guests in.

"Mr. Thorne and the others are in the library, sir," said Gower.

"Thank you," responded Donovan, curtly. As the library doorway he turned quickly to see Gower's eyes upon him. Instantly the leader turned away. There was a frown on the young man's face as he entered the room.

"Why?" exclaimed a tall, blood-pink, whatever it was in the world is proving our little Macklin?

Donovan smiled as the others looked toward him. "Happy as a lark," he answered the girl. "You'll avoid me - I have drawing all afternoon to keep my eyes from wandering - haven't got my feet straightened out yet."

Great Ross Savage was standing upon the opposite side of the room facing him. Donovan was distinctly aware that Savage's eyes were looking past him and not at him, as were the eyes of the other occupants of the library. As he advanced into the room he drew his eyes away from his pocket and as he did so he it deep to the floor behind him. With a laughing exclamation in his consciousness he turned quickly to pick up the man, perceiving his glance to pass rapidly toward the doorway through which he had just entered the room, and the hall beyond. Gower was standing in the shadows of the hallway, a finger raised. As Donovan turned back toward the room he was still smoking, but he was the only one who knew why.

"We're not going back to Three Gables tomorrow, Macklin," announced his host. "Genevieve has had enough of New York in the summer time."

"I thought it best if it would go along way with her when she asked you to bring her," replied Donovan, smiling. "You are returning with us?"

The little Thorne smiled. "Get my business all squared up. Shall be glad to get one of the devils here."

"Humph!" reflected Miss Euphonia Thorne, his sister. "You haven't connected a lot of business. Why in the world you wanted to drag an old doctor here this time of year is quite beyond me. Make us

all suffer for nothing, absolutely nothing. Bunsen - laugh!"

"I didn't drag you down, Euphonia. As a matter of fact I tried to persuade you not to come. I have how you have the way to summer. And as for my business, I'm a fair worker," he added with a laugh. "I'll knock up the rag trade after the rest of you are so hot tonight." He glanced at Savage and then returned once again. Donovan was certain that the American had shot a quick warning from those deep-set, somber eyes.

"Well," snapped Euphonia, rising. "You go to sleep (or dance), and I think the rest of you had better be doing the same."

"Why, it was four thirty yet, Ann. Percy -" exclaimed Percy Thorne.

"I don't care what time it is, and I wish you wouldn't call me Ann. Percy - it's vulgar and disrespectful. If your Grandfather was alive, he'd tell us -"

"But that - he will. Have a cigar, Annie!"

"You know I never smoke. I don't approve of women smoking. You just ask that to satisfy me. It is a filthy habit that I have never acquired."

I don't know that you had ever acquired any filthy habit, Annie. But then it was my nephew who knows his wife was, these days."

The regular little woman moved majestically toward the doorway. Now it was turned and faced her brother. "Mama," she announced, "I shall not remain to be washed further."

Her brother laughed considerably. "See you in dinner, Ed," he called after her.

"You can smoke a smoke now, Genevieve," said Percy to the tall blonde.

"I have not smoked smoking," replied the girl with a shrug. "I do not like your Aunt Euphonia's remedy."

"No one does except herself," replied the young man.

"I wish you would come smoking occasionally, Genevieve," approved her mother. "Never more smoking, although the women from a country where the women have smoked for generations, and the men to be just as happy."

But I do not enjoy smoking," exclaimed Miss Savage. "I'm sure that I should make it if I did enjoy it."

The tall Miss Glensack arose from her chair, hesitantly, and walked to Donovan's side. "Do you think I smoke too much, Macklin?" she inquired, perversely, placing a hand softly upon his arm.

Miss Glanville beamed "Oh, these children!" she exclaimed. "It doesn't make any difference what I think, or what anyone else thinks, as long as Markie thinks it's all right." If she sought to suggest someone else was not entirely convincing.

Markie (Dorcas) was visibly ill at ease for a moment, but he laughed it off quickly. Percy Thorne appeared bored and restless. Could looks write, Miss Glanville thought. Nobody Glanville would have assumed the dimensions of a poison, but she did not even guess that Percy Thorne was looking at her.

Dorcas patted Glanville's hand where a key upon his sleeve. "But were you wouldn't do anything too much, Miss," he assured her.

Servants cast a quick glance at her daughter, caught her eye, and directed a hurried and very meaningful look toward Miss Glanville and Dorcas. Maria Sanchez merely raised her delicate brows.

A little later the three women went to their rooms to dress. Sanchez examined himself privately and was soon followed by the other Thorne. Then Percy Thorne turned to Dorcas.

"Look here, Mark," he said. "What is there between you and Gene? I want to know."

"Nothing, you old fool, except the Dorcas millions," and the speaker laughed. "Can't you see that she doesn't give a tinker's care for me - that old law number nine is agging her out?"

"I think she's in love with you," insisted Thorne. "I want to see her when they leave the work alone me," said Dorcas.

You may be right about the old lady - the other. But for her back roll, her Gene - never! She's true blue, Mark. She's the real thing, and it goes about down me up to see her falling in love with one of my best friends."

"Will you ought to know your friends, Percy? If that is not, it's accurate for Gene you ought not to bring me around."

"Can the remedy? I'm in love with her and you're not, at least you say you're not, though I don't see how you can help being - and I don't want to lose her, and I don't want to play second fiddle."

"Don't worry, Percy. It won't be for long now unless I miss my guess. Things are coming to a head mighty quick. I have no idea that I'll love a lot before I am many hours older, and it may be that I can take away them in a hurry and not give up your love affairs with my (ship millions."

"It isn't the money, Mark - she's in love with

you, I'm afraid. I've got money enough, as far as that's concerned, but she can't even see me when you're around."

"You mean when Maria's around," corrected Dorcas. "I saw her looking eyes at you and rubbing up against you there at Thorne's Club and on the yacht's very near Maria was thinking."

Thorne shook his head. "I wish you were right," he said, but you ain't. Come on, let's go up and dress." He arose and walked toward the door.

"I'll be up in a minute - you run along," replied Dorcas. "I want to look around for a bit."

Thorne nodded and ran up the stairs that, descending from the second floor, opened into the large library. What he had seen Dorcas walked quickly to the doorway leading to the hall. As he did so the heavy hangings before a doorway on the opposite side from the library moved, but the hall was dark and Dorcas did not see the movement. He had scarcely reached the doorway when his attention was attracted by the sound of light footsteps on the stairway above. Turning quickly, he saw Maria Sanchez descending. She had halted almost at the instant that he turned but immediately resumed her downward course. Had he suspected her? Would she have turned back had he not discovered her? He wondered.

"Ah, Maria Dorcas?" she exclaimed. "I thought everyone had gone to her room. I did not expect to meet anyone," she flushed prettily.

He realized now why she might have wanted to turn back again. She was in a slipper. A very beautiful creature that set off her dark loveliness beautifully. Dorcas stood with one hand upon the metal post in the pill decorated - but back toward the hall doorway.

"I left a little bag down here," she explained. "It contained a few trinkets that I should not care to lose. Ah, there it is!" and she crossed quickly to the door in which the hall hung swung and picked up a small gold bag. As she returned to the stairway, where Dorcas still stood, she paused on the lower step. "You had better hurry and dress for dinner, Mr. Dorcas," she said, with her pretty accent, "or you will be late." As she spoke she played with the little gold bag, opening it and closing it. Dorcas was aware of a very delicate and delicious fragrance about her.

"What a wonderful perfume," he remarked. "The girl smiled and opened the bag again. "Yes," she said, drawing a small jeweled pin from the emerald and holding it toward her face, "it is

very wonderful. The emperor of Astoria, before he was assassinated – just a few days – so a friend of my father. There is no more like it in all the world. It is very old and has never been uncovered, yet it permeates whatever it comes in contact with. I just took it from my trunk today – you did not notice it before?”

“There was too much trouble in the room, I guess, he replied. Suddenly he placed his hand upon hers. “I wanted to say that otherwise, but I realize I very well will write some that I am glad you do not realize.”

For just an instant an eager light shone in her eyes, and then she drew back.

“I am glad,” she said gently. “if I have pleased Master Donovan.”

“Pleased me? Oh, Maria, you must know –” he drew her suddenly close to him. “you must have seen that I –”

Quickly she placed a cool, red palm across his lips. “Stop!” she cried, and her eyes looked frightened.

The heavy hangings upon the opposite side of the hallway moved. Donovan’s head was toward them.

He drew to her. “I love you!” he said, almost wildly, it seemed. “You must have known it – you must have! Why can I not love you?”

She looked away. “More dead,” she explained. “I do love you,” but there was horror in her eyes and in her voice as she turned and fled up the stairway.

Donovan looked after her for a moment with puzzled eyes, and then, passing his palm slowly across the back of his neck, he slowly ascended the stairs toward his room.

“The more you see of me, the less you know about me,” he reflected as he closed his bedroom door behind him.

It is some at the opposite end of the house and upon the other side of the hall Mrs. Glanville’s maid was arranging her mistress’s hair, while Mrs. Glanville sat before a dressing table applying her face. “At your age I should have had hair long before this,” Mrs. Glanville was remarking. “The girl of today lacks subtlety of convenience in such matters.”

Her daughter shrugged her two shoulders. “I don’t want hair,” she said. “I want Percy. I should think the Thorns will not would be enough.”

“Gonsense, you are vulgar,” her mother retorted. “And anyway, if I marry Mr. Thorne I

can expect coming over soon my former rights as the more of her debts, since Percy will inherit the bulk of the fortune, while Mr. Donovan, being an only child, I am told, will inherit his father’s entire estate – a matter of some hundreds of millions.”

Across the hall from the Glanville Maria Sanchez stood before her mirror, smiling. In the doorway of her closed room Count Boris Sanchez-like, too, was viewing.

“You had him there,” he said in a low voice, approvingly.

The girl made no reply. “Do not bid us again,” said Sanchez – his eyes were well modulated, but ugly. Then he stepped back into the closet and closed the door.

Nervous, her hand upon one table, leaned for a moment, then, almost fiercely, she passed the back of her hand to her eyes, as one in pain. “I can still cut it!” she murmured.

(P)

Chapter II

It was after one o’clock the following morning before they returned from supper and dancing at one of the city’s popular roof gardens. Goetz admitted them. As she passed him Maria Sanchez raised her brows questioningly and the waiter replied with an almost imperceptible inclination of his head. Neither set would have been noticeable to other than specially trained senses – such as Donovan’s. It was his business to not so much reveal occurrences and thus one did not surprise him. He was puzzled and vexed – vexed with himself that he could not detect Maria Sanchez’s connection with the band of conspirators that he felt he was at last closing in upon after weeks of seemingly fruitless effort.

He had always suspected Sanchez and at first had supposed that the Astoria’s daughter was unusually interested with the band of which her father was a part. Reasoning from the premise it was not strange that he should seek to ingratiate himself with the girl, that through her he might gain the knowledge he sought. To this end he sought her companionship with a view to establishing friendly and amiable relations that might develop into something closer if necessary to his ends. The trick had been that one could not be seen unable to connect her with any of the activities that he believed chargeable to the band under investigation, but he had fallen hopelessly in

low with her. And so he was puzzled and vexed as he walked down the hallway toward the library with the others.

After a few moments' desultory conversation as which no one seemed interested Miss Thorne announced her intention of retiring—a suggestion that evidently met with the approval of the others, who, with "Good night," ascended the stairway to their several chambers. Before entering Miss Gorton made the rounds of the lower floor, turning off all the lights with the exception of a small night lamp in the front hallway and a second small lamp in the library, which was the last room to which he gave his summons. Instead of returning to the servants' stairway at the rear of the house which he should have used in going to his room on the fourth floor, he ascended the main stairway from the library. He left a light on the landing about half way up the stairs, but shut off all three on the hallway on the second floor, which was, however, slightly illuminated by the light from the landing. There doors seemed to be passed for a moment, as the master of the hall, apparently huzzing. He looked quickly here in one direction and then in the other, after which, seemingly satisfied, he ascended the second flight of steps to the third floor where were located the apartments of the family. Ordinarily a small passenger elevator was used to reach the upper floors, but that was temporarily out of commission while undergoing its annual summer overhauling during the absence of the family in those parts. From the third floor a single flight of stairs led to the servants' quarters on the floor above.

This stairway was near the rear end of the third floor hallway. Directly opposite it was a small dark alcove where there were large a variety assortment of brooms, brushes, sweeps, dustmats, vacuum cleaners and similar paraphernalia.

Gorton turned out all but a single light in the third floor hall, walked to the foot of the stairway, paused, listened, and then, turning quickly, crossed the hall silently, opened the door of the dark alcove, entered it, and closed the door after him.

Macklin Duncan had gone directly to his room, removed his dinner coat, tie and collar and sat down to study and read at a table near one of the open windows which overlooked the small garden at the rear of the house. Outside this window was a narrow iron balcony identical with those outside every other window on this floor, both front and rear. Their railings did not

connect with those adjacent to them, being separated by a space of about three feet. The houses upon either side were similarly designed by these mid-Western architects.

Macklin's book was opened the open window and he was lying on the threshold of the door looking into the hallway. He was not particularly interested in the book he was reading—it did not hold his attention. It was better than nothing, however, in keeping him in pace the moment the houselight appeared, for he had a suspicion that something might happen thereafter that would prove of interest to him and to his chief in Washington.

He had been sitting there for about half an hour, occasionally looking up from his uninteresting book to stare upon his expert, when his eyes alighted upon a folded paper lying on the threshold partially inside the room. It had not been there a moment before, of that he was positive. There had been no sound the paper had not been there one minute—the next minute it had. That was all there was to it.

In the instant that he discovered the thing he leaped quickly toward the door with the intention of throwing it open, but before he had reached the knob his thought, better of his contemplated act and instead stopped and picked up the paper. Whoever put it there did not want to be seen. Perhaps it would be better to humor them, unopenly at least.

Standing near the door he opened the package and read its contents, after which he was glad that he had not yielded to his first impulse to rush into the hall in an effort to discover the messenger. The note was in a business hand and read: "Mr. J. M. Duncan is expected at 10:30. Please nothing to tell yet. It is of some life," and it was signed with the initials "R. S."

Duncan's right palm went to the back of his neck in a characteristic gesture of perplexity. It was a Miss Merton—the wasn't the sort of girl that would ask a man to her room at that hour of the morning—unless—ah, that was it! She wanted to tell him something that she didn't dare tell him before Barnaby. It must be that. It must be something urgent. What was it, was it, was it all right—he could trust her—and that he was quite sure. He glanced at his watch. It looked about five minutes to quarter past. He went to his dressing room, fastened on his collar, adjusted his tie and slipped into his dinner coat.

As he returned his room a light on a dressing

piece, cautiously descending the stairway from the third floor, passing occasionally to lower. At the foot of the stairs it halted and glanced quickly up and down the hall the light in which was the door to reveal the location of the occasional prowler. Discovering no one, the muffled figure crept stealthily along the dark hallway toward the front of the house.

As Donovan entered his room he turned immediately to his dresser from which he took an enormous parcel which he was on the point of slipping into a hip-pocket when he hesitated, held the parcel in front of him in the palm of his hand for an instant and then, with a smile and a shrug, replaced it in the dresser and closed the drawer. As he walked toward the hall door his eyes fell upon the table as he passed it. His vision to an abrupt stop and whirling, such a fearful survey of the room, for propped against the reading lamp was a square blue envelope that had not been there when he had quitted the room a few minutes before. Stretching it up he saw his own initials crudely printed upon its face. The flap, which was but feebly sealed, he tore open, revealing an ordinary square correspondence card upon which was printed at the name rule head a single word **ATTN:ALBY**.

A brow creased Donovan's brow. His hall door was locked. He glanced toward the open window, and then quickly at his watch. It was exactly quarter past two. Slipping the blue envelope and the card into his pocket, he crossed the room to the hall door. As he laid his hand upon the knob the report of a firearm reverberated through the house, followed almost immediately by the sound of a body falling, and the piercing shriek of a woman.

Throwing the door open Donovan stepped out into the hall and ran quickly toward the front of the house, the direction from which the shot had sounded. At the head of the stair leading to the library he stumbled over a huddled heap covered by a dressing gown. A few feet farther along the hall was Nancy Sarnow's room on one side and seven feet in that occupied by Mrs. Glanville and her daughter. From that position, of the body Donovan's police instinct passed almost instantly the fact that the shot could have been fired from under Marie's room, but not from the Glanvilles' room. Yes, it might also have been fired from the doorway of the room occupied by Grace Bern Sarnow, but from the direction that the door of

the various rooms opened it could most easily have been fired from Marie's. Had the door been opened not more than an inch, by one standing concealed within, some of those things come to him as suppositions at the moment, to be verified by investigation later. But above all else these loomed above him like a hidden power the appalling fact that the shot had been fired precisely at quarter past two.

Sarnow was the first on the scene, followed quickly by Percy Thorne and George. George and Sarnow were fully dressed, a fact which no one but Donovan seemed to note. It was Sarnow who crouched on the light.

"What has happened?" he cried.

Donovan pointed at the huddled form lying on the floor, the head and face of which were hidden by the large collar of the dressing gown that had fallen across them as the body had slumped to the floor. "Murder!" he replied.

Sarnow looked bewildered, and as George came running up his eyes were wide with astonishment and incredulity, but they were not looking at the body on the floor. They were fixed on Martin Donovan.

Mrs. Glanville now came from her room, and behind her was Genevieve, while servants were pouring from the upper floors.

"Who is it?" demanded Percy Thorne.

Donovan stooped and drew back the collar of the dressing gown. A screen broke from the lips of Mrs. Glanville. "My God!" she cried. "It's Marie."

"Father!" exclaimed Percy Thorne, dropping to his knees beside the body. "Who could have done it?" he cried. "Who could have done it?" and he looked around at them all standing there questioningly, accusingly.

Donovan knelt beside Percy and turned the body over so as to back opened the dressing gown and the shirt and placed his ear above the heart. Presently he arose. They were all looking at him, eyes filled with suspense. Donovan shook his head, sadly.

"Mr. Thorne is dead," he said. "George, go to the phone and call the police. Percy, we shall have to leave the body here until they come. You had better go and prepare your aunt, and prevent her coming down until the police have been here. I shall remain here. The rest of you may go to your rooms, or out as you wish. There is nothing that anyone can do until after the police come."



The body of Henry J. Thorne was laid upon the couch.

Percy Thorne came to his feet like one in a trance and moved slowly down the hall toward the main landing to the third floor, where was his next room. Gower ran quickly down the stairs to the library to the telephone. Donovan looked about him. "Where was Maria Sanchez?"

"Mr. Glanville," he said, turning to that help. "Will you kindly step to Miss Sanchez's room and see if she is all right?"

Miss Glanville opened the hall and knocked lightly on Miss Sanchez's door. There was no response. She knocked again, more imperiously. Still no response.

"Try the door," directed Donovan. It was locked. Donovan turned toward Sanchez. "Where is your daughter?" he demanded. He was no longer the same young society man. Instead his voice cut like steel, and as it was the ring of steel.

Sanchez was pale. "She must be in her room," he replied. "Where else could she be?"

Donovan continued to a couple of frightened women. "Back down the door!" he commanded.

As they stepped forward to obey, the door of Maria Sanchez's room opened revealing her standing there, fully dressed, and breathing rapidly. At sight of blacked Donovan she voiced a little cry that she tried to smother, and her eyes were very wide, as had Gower's eyes.

"What has happened?" she cried, when she found her voice. "I heard a shot and I must have screamed. What is it?" and she looked down at the wall figure on the door. "Oh, no!" she cried when she recognized the features. "It cannot be. It cannot be Mr. Thorne. It must be a terrible mistake!"

"It was a terrible mistake, Miss Sanchez," said

Donovan, sadly, his eyes steadily upon her.

394

Chapter III

The police came, and, as Fate would have it, under the command of Lieutenant Terrance Donovan, and after the arrival of the deputy coroner the body of Henry J. Thorne was removed to the small room off the library—a room that he had used for a study and in which was a large couch. It was laid upon the couch, near an open window. Then Terrance Donovan returned to the library. Miss Glanville was there, and Governor Percy Thorne sat at a table beside her aunt, who was weeping softly, trying to comfort her. Sanchez stood before the cold fireplace smoking a cigar. Gower remained beside the door to his master's study. There were three heavy police officers and some of the maids and housemen, also, the latter standing near the hall doorway although momentarily appearing to be banished.

"Now," and Terrance Donovan, "I went to her about this. Who saw the shooting?"

"No one," replied her son, "as far as I have been able to discover. We all heard the shot. It was fired at precisely a quarter past two. He glanced at Sanchez, but the lamp was looking at the ceiling. Maria was out at the moment. It was the first to reach the hall. I found Mr. Thorne lying where you found him, but on his face. It was necessary for me to carry him over to examine him for signs of life. Otherwise the body was not disturbed."

Neither Lieutenant Donovan nor Macklin had given any indication of their relationship or that they were even acquainted, owing to the fact that the latter was assuming a role necessary to the successful prosecution of his investigations and also exposure in the case would doubtless nullify all that the Department had accomplished.

"Who do you think might have had reason to wish to kill Mr. Thorne?" continued Lieutenant Donovan.

"I believe that no one could have had any reason for wishing to kill him," replied Macklin. "To my knowledge he had no enemy in the world and I never heard him in discussion with anyone. He was a most kind and considerate man to his friends, his acquaintances and his servants, while his son and mine, the only members of his immediate family, were devoted to him. He

passed. "It is my belief, sir, that the shot that killed Mr. Thorne was intended for another." As he spoke he looked closely at Saratov whose eyes were now upon him, and was rewarded by a slight narrowing of the other's lids.

"Who followed you into the hall after the shot was fired?" asked the police official.

"I did," said Saratov. "Mr. Donovan was standing over the body of Mr. Thorne as I came from my room. The hall was but dimly lighted, yet sufficiently to permit me to see Mr. Donovan. He was putting something in his hip pocket as I opened the door of my room." The statement was obvious, and that it was thoroughly understood was manifest by the sound of quick breathing of breath by several of the occupants of the library—a natural reaction to mental shock and surprise.

Madison smiled. "You better have me searched, Lieutenant," he said.

"I object to his being searched or questioned further by this officer," pronounced Saratov.

"Why?" asked Lieutenant Donovan.

"Because you are his father," replied the American, and the effect of this second remark was almost equal to that of the first. The chin of Mrs. Peabody Glanville dropped for an instant, and then she smiled reproachfully.

"The count must have lost his mind," she whispered to her daughter. "The very idea—Madison Donovan the son of a common politician!"

Genevieve turned to a police officer standing behind them. "What is the lieutenant's name?" she asked.

"Terrance Donovan, ma'am," replied Officer McGinty.

Mrs. Glanville appeared slightly groggy, but she was still in the tug. "Bibulous?" she exclaimed. "He is of the Donovans of the President." She looked defiantly, and crushingly, at Officer McGinty.

"Sure, ma'am," said he, "in a way it was that was after you; the way it was the drink over there," and he smiled in the direction of Saratov.

Terrance Donovan eyed the American for a moment before he replied. "What makes you think this man is my son?" he demanded.

Saratov has smiled. He seemed to regret that he had made the charge. He smiled deprecatingly and spread his palms before him with a shrug. "It was a matter of no moment until now," he said. "One

of the women at Three Gables told my valet I gave the matter no thought—sincerely believed it, in fact, until you arrived here tonight. Then I recalled."

"How does it happen that you know my name?" asked Terrance Donovan.

Saratov was indirectly reproached by the question. He realized his mistake instantly, but it was too late to remedy it—there was no reason in the world that he would care to have these people know of, why he should have any knowledge whatever of the existence of Lieutenant Terrance Donovan. He sought to cover his confusion by a show of anger.

"It makes no difference how I know," he snapped. "I do know, and I don't purpose permitting the murderer of my friend to escape because he is the son of a police lieutenant. I demand that some other officer pursue the investigations."

Terrance Donovan smiled. "You are right," he said. "I thank Captain Barker a heart now. I just heard the news from him, and he was needed at his home at the time I left the room."

He does not deny that Madison is his son," whispered Genevieve to her mother.

"Preposterous," said Mrs. Glanville, but she said it in a small voice—she was weakening.

"I always suspected him," she added, "he never impressed me as one having the air of one to the manner born, as it were."

At this moment a large man in the uniform of a captain of police entered the room. He nodded to Lieutenant Donovan and crossed to his side. The two men whispered together in low tones for a few minutes, then Captain Barker pointed a large forefinger at Count Boris Saratov.

"Do you accuse Mr. Madison Donovan of the murder of Misses E. Thorne?" he asked.

"I accuse no one," replied Saratov. "I merely relate what I witnessed."

"What did you witness beside what you have told Lieutenant Donovan?"

"After the police came, and while they were carrying Mr. Thorne's body down stairs Mr. Donovan went to his room, took a piece of paper from his pocket and burned it."

Madison Donovan looked at the speaker in surprise. Saratov had spoken the truth, but how had he known?

"Perhaps," continued the count, "he may have hidden his pistol at the same time—provided of

course that it was he who shot Mr. Thorne. If the pistol is not in his possession now it may be in his room. He should be searched and so should his room."

"Sure it's a dirty house!" growled Officer McGraw. "I've known Mackie Donovan since he was knee-high to a mule—in all, an' there ain't a wadder hair in his head." He spoke in a whisper that was audible only to the Glascocks.

Then, you admit that he is the son of that person there," accused Mrs. Glascock. "I am not in the least surprised. I have read right along that he had a low face."

Glascock looked at her mother in wide-eyed amazement. "I think he's wonderful," she said, "and I have changed my mind about marrying him." She could not see in the expression on perhaps her mother's confusion for the older woman's past unbecome efforts at matchmaking.

"You will remain in Philadelphia today," snapped Mrs. Glascock.

Captain Barker was searching Macklin for a weapon—which he did not find.

"Now we'll take a look at your room," he said. "You come along," he pointed at Sarrows. The son of you stay here. See that no one leaves the room, McGraw."

Lieutenant Donovan glanced quickly around the library as he accompanied Barker, Sarrows and Macklin toward the stairway. "Where's the butler?" he demanded suddenly.

"Why, he was here just a moment ago," replied Percy Thorne. "Perhaps he's stopped over the next room," and he pointed to the study where his father's body lay. "Glascock?" he called, but there was no response.

One of the policemen stepped into the adjoining room. "There ain't no one in there," he said, as he re-entered the library a moment later.

"Find him," directed the captain, as he led the way up the stairs with Macklin Donovan at his side.

Upon the left of the landing half way up the stairs was a tall pier glass and in Macklin's scowled upon Barker's right. His eyes turned toward the latter, who was speaking, toward the mirror beyond the captain, whose eyes were turned away from it. Reflected in it, just far as distant, Macklin saw the shadowy figure of a woman, dark hair, his cousin at the far end of the dimly lighted hall. He was upon the point of telling Barker what he had

seen when there flashed in his mind the realization that all the women in the house, even one—was in the library below, and that one was Harriet Sarrows. An instant later they reached the head of the stairs at full view of the entire hallway. There had been no opportunity for whoever had entered his room to leave it. The hall had been lighted when last he passed through it after the officers had come, but now the lights were extinguished, the only illumination coming from the landing on the stairway. Who had extinguished them, and why? Possibly what he had just now offered as the answer explained why.

The three men walked directly to Macklin's room, which like the hall, was in darkness although Donovan distinctly recalled that the lamp on the reading table had been lighted when he left the room. Just inside the doorway was a switch which operated two inverted cone lights suspended from the ceiling. Macklin pressed the switch and the room was flooded with light.

"I suggest that you make a very thorough search," said Sarrows.

"When I want any suggestions from you I'll ask you for 'em," replied Barker, sternly, and Sarrows withdrew, snuffling.

"Got a gun, Macklin?" asked the captain. "It's in my dresser—top drawer on the left," replied young Donovan, indicating the inside of his bureau with a poke of his thumb.

Captain Barker crossed to the dresser and opened the upper left hand drawer in which he rummaged for a moment. "No gun here, Macklin," he said.

Macklin Donovan knotted his brow. "It was there at the instant that Mr. Thorne was shot," he said. "I had just placed it there. I do not know what has become of it."

The police officer continued to search the dresser—and then each of the other pieces of furniture in the two rooms and the closet. Nowhere could he find a pistol. Sarrows was quite evidently restraining a desire to speak, only with the greatest difficulty. At last he could hold his peace no longer. "Why don't you search the bed?" he demanded, eagerly.

Macklin glanced quickly toward the bed, the corner at the foot of which, he noticed for the first time, were disarranged as though they had been pulled out from the side and hastily pushed in again. Barker examined several pieces of overturned furniture, apparently ignoring

Barnes's suggestions, then moved to the bed and pulled the coverings aside. One by one he removed and shook them. Finally he turned the mattress completely off the springs. Barnes was almost standing on top of it. There was no weapon there!

Young Donovan was looking at Barnes, upon whom he kept his eyes as much as possible, and he saw the look of blank surprise that crossed the Assistant's face when it became definitely evident that there was no pistol hidden in or about the bed.

All the time that the search had been going on Donovan had been awaiting the discovery of the pistol he had seen near the door only a moment ahead of them and a very quick and easy way was suggested to a case of extreme folly implying that which Barnes had created when he pointed out the door. Barnes had been discussing the matter. Walking to one of the windows he looked out and examined the balconies along the front of the house—there was no car there.

They returned to the library just as the officer who had been detailed to find Gorman entered the room. "I've searched the whole house, Cap'n," he said, "but he ain't here. The house is being watched outside front as well as there isn't no one gone out."

Barker nodded. "Then he must be inside," he said. He turned to the company in the room.

"You'll all admit that there's something peculiar about this case. I can lock you all up on suspicion, but I don't want to do that. Right now, there ain't a one against anybody, and so I'll give you your choice of remaining here under guard until morning or going to the stables. Under the circumstances I can't make any exceptions, and I'm sure that a point is made you may have. Which will it be?" They unanimously chose to remain in the house, under guard. "Now go to your rooms and stay there." He walked from the room, back along Lieutenant Donovan to follow him. "I like you here," he explained in a low voice. "Because I don't have in the best place to trap the murderer. He's one of us, but I don't know which one. Don't let any one leave the house and try, but this damned barker. See you about eight o'clock," and he departed.

Chapter IV

As the party started toward their rooms Macklin bowed farewell beside Mrs. Glanville and Genevieve. "It has been a terrible experience for you," he said. "I hope that it has no ill effects. If I can be of any service to you here as to call upon me."

Mrs. Glanville then most perceptibly. "The only service you can render my young man, is to permit us to forget the hair-raising position in which your importance has placed us," and she swept superficially up the stairway.

Genevieve joined hands with him. "I am sorry for you, Mr. Donovan," she said softly, "but you have brought it upon yourself. One should not pretend to be what one is not," and she followed her mother up the stairs to their rooms.

Perry Thorn, waiting his turn, followed them. As he passed Donovan he stopped and put a hand on the other's shoulder. "I want you to know, Macklin," he said, "that I think forever is a damned long time."

"Thanks," replied Donovan. "I know you would not believe such a ridiculous charge."

"But who in the world could have done it?" asked Thorn.

Donovan shook his head. "I wish I knew," he replied.

He remained a moment, and the others had gone to speak to his father. He asked them some questions, but finally, only to learn that there had been no change, then he rose, mounted the stairs toward his room. As he reached the top step the door of Myra Barnes's room opened and he saw her standing there. It was evident that she wanted to speak to him. She held a large to her lips, signaling silence, at the same time motioning them toward her. He had taken but a couple of steps in his direction when the door of Barnes's room opened and he stepped into the hall. Simultaneously Myra stepped back into her room and closed her door.

"I thought your room was at the opposite end of the hall. My Donovan," said Barnes, with a slightly sarcastic reflection.

No one should know it better than you," replied Macklin.

Barnes pulled. "Keep away from my daughter's room," he said, harshly.

Macklin bowed. "She has been absent from the

library when the police come," he said, "and I feared that the night be independent. I but wished to stop and inquire. Perhaps you can enlighten me."

"My daughter is quite well, thank you," replied Sansone, and as Donarvon bowed again and turned toward his room the other watched him until he was out of sight.

Again as he went, the house retired to the normal quiet of the early morning hours. Donarvon threw himself upon an easy chair beside the table, and lighting a cigarette sat pondering the misfortune of the night. That which occupied him most was a mad effort to discover some means of removing all suspicion connected with the strange that he believed had been made upon his life, from the prison of Maria Sansone. He did not want to believe that he had had any guilty part in it, and yet, try as he would to reach another, the conviction remained unshakable that she had attempted to kill him, to his death, and that by chance only Maria E. Thors had approached her door at the very instant that she had expected Donarvon. It made him want to even think it, and so he would set off each time upon a new tack in a desperate effort to explain his various questionable actions upon some other hypothesis. But he could not explain away his evident surprise when he discovered her there, he could not explain why she had been the last to come to the hall after the firing of the first shot, he could not explain why the wall Gloria alone of all the company had been alone from the library during the police investigation. His judgment told him that the man Gloria and Sansone were at the bottom of the plot to kill him, yet but just now when she had attempted to speak to him Sansone had parried. Then there was the memory of those almost tragic words that fell were ringing in his ears: "Now Don! I do love you!" and recollection of the horror that had been in his eyes as he viewed the cry and fled up that stairway. What did it all mean? Donarvon rubbed the back of his neck with his right palm, but the movement had scarcely begun when it stopped abruptly, the man remaining with his hand so his neck in rigid immobility. His eyes glared upon the floor at the bottom of the closet door beneath which a piece of paper was slowly being pushed into the room.

Cautionally Donarvon arose from his chair and up went across the room toward the closet. He made no noise as he moved, came and his hand

fell upon the knob and then, at the same instant, he flung the door wide. The closet was empty. He entered it and examined every inch of it. It was absolutely empty except for a couple of rats that he had hung in the day before. Like all the other closets in the house it was waistcoat width only to the same height that the rooms were paneled to various ornamental woods.

Hybrid, Donarvon came from the closet and locked the door, leaving the key in the lock. Then he snatched and peered up the lot of folded paper. It bore but a single word—the same word that the other message had borne: "BEWARE!"

As he stood before the closet door staring the bit of paper over and over, the while he searched his mind for an explanation as to the identity of its sender and the means by which he had been able to shove it from under the closet door without being in the closet, his attention was attracted by what seemed to be a shuffling sound from one of the balconies before the window on the opposite side of the room. Curiously he raised his eyes toward the window. The light from the reading lamp illuminated the table, the chair beside it, and a little area of the floor surrounding the table, leaving the balcony of the room in a subdued light.

Beyond the table was the window from which the sound seemed to come. As he watched he thought that he saw something move upon the balcony just outside the window. He remained very quiet, apparently examining the paper in his hand, his eyes hardly turned to the window. Again he saw the movement without a human hand reached forth toward the wall. It clanked the balcony as an attempt to raise it higher, but the rail did not move. Then another hand appeared, perhaps to help. In the second hand was a long thin dagger. The second hand never reached the rail. There was a shot. The hands disappeared. The table of card on which a cross balance.

Donarvon leaped for the window that was open and stepped out onto the balcony. There was no one there; there was no one on any of the other balconies. A rich lark voice rose from below.

"Now the devil's wrong up the wall!" it demanded. Its owner was one of the officers left to guard the rest of the house.

"I thought I heard a shot!" said Donarvon. He said nothing about the figure on his balcony for he had determined to bribe and the mystery of that night, unaided. If Maria was involved he

wanted to know a few; and shield him, if he could. Love and jealousy surely have different masters.

He stepped and examined the stone floor of the balcony. There lay the dagger. He picked it up and carried it into his room. He could hear people running through the hall, aroused and alarmed by the second shot. He heard the gruff, low tones of the police, and the high, frightened voices of women. He carried the dagger to the table and held a candle to the light. His face was very near it as he examined it minutely. It was a weapon of foreign make, an ivory grip bound with strips of gold. A faint fragrance wafted to his nostrils. Quickly he raised the grip closer to them and inhaled, then he let the weapon fall on the table as he had dropped it long ago in his side. His face was drawn and white - the ink was smeared with Narva's Saranov's perfume.

For a moment he stood thus, then he turned and walked quickly to the door, opened it and stepped into the hall. He wanted to see who was there - at least particularly, who was not. They were all there - Saranov, Narva, the Gluschkas, servants and police. Percy Thorne came down a staircase lower, his arms behind him. Gorrie alone was absent. No one seemed able to explain the shot and Dumas kept silent as to what had happened upon his balcony and within his room.

Two, perhaps, were watching the occupants of the house returned once more to their rooms. Macklin threw himself upon his bed fully dressed, after switching off the light. He did not intend to sleep. He had wanted to wait until the house quieted, if a mere tick, then he might, on comparative safety from discovery, go to Saranov's door and listen. He had no idea that Gorrie was in there, and he wanted to make sure. But he was surprised almost exhausted - and he dozed before he realized the danger. It could have been for that he cannot believe his sleep was shattered by a pattering warning and again a dash ring through the house.

Macklin leaped from his bed and ran toward the hall door as he did so, from the closed door on the opposite side of the room, a pistol flashed at the dark and a bullet whizzed by his head. As he had no weapon, he could not return the fire, but he sprang to the window and leaned on the ledge. Then he withdrew and faced the door - it was closed and the key was full upon the outside, where he had left it. He opened the room and used the knob - the door was locked!

As he entered the hall again he found it filled with nervous men and terrified women. Everyone was talking at once. Only the police were near control, and even their nerves were all on edge.

Lieutenant Tarrance Dumas was among them. "Who's missing, Macklin?" he demanded of his son.

"The brother, Count Saranov," replied young Dumas, and his daughter.

"The brother is not on the premises," said his father. "Which is Count Saranov's room?"

"Here," said Macklin, looking the way. The others crowded on their way.

Lieutenant Dumas opened the door and fumbled for the light switch. His son stepped past him and found it, flooding the room with light. "Look!" he exclaimed, and pointed toward the door.

There, on the floor, his body in the room, his legs extended into the closet, lay Count Boris Saranov upon his back, blood pouring from a bullet wound in his forehead. Macklin Dumas raised and ran toward the hall.

"Boris Saranov?" he cried. "Something may have happened to him."

His father followed him, and again the others swarmed behind. Macklin knocked upon the girl's door - there was no response. He knocked again - louder. Silence. Moreover the others made him stepped back, passed, heaved himself against the door with all his weight, making it with a thoulder. A single lamp burned upon a table. The room was empty - as was the dressing room and bath and closet.

Macklin called the girl's name aloud. "Narva! Narva!" but there was no response. He looked



From the closed door he appears outside of the room, a pistol shot whizzed by his head.

Madly at his father. "What do you make of it, Dad?" he asked.

The older man shook his head. "It's got me," he admitted. "But we'll find her - she must be in the house."

"That's what you said about Gustav, but now command him," but you haven't found him yet."

"I'll search the house myself this time," replied Terrence Donovan. "If want to have a closer look at Samara's room and the body, then we'll look it up, and I'll go through the house."

Together they went into the hall and approached Samara's door. It was closed - they had left it open. The older Donovan tried the knob, but the door did not open, then he stepped and looked through the keyhole.

"The door is locked, Mackin," he said. "It is locked on the inside." He passed no one of his men. "Break it in, McGowerty," he said.

The huge Irishman had to do little more than lean against the door to send it crashing into the room. The lieutenant called. "There is nothing better than a son of Mack," he said, and McGowerty grinned, but the smile and the grin both faded as the two officers stepped onto the room. For Samara's body was not there - only a little pool of blood marked the spot upon the floor outside the open closed door where the dead man's hand had rested.

Terrence Donovan scratched his head, then he turned and looked nervously at the company dressed in the doorway. A whispered, terrified murmuring was ribbing hysterically.

Start up?" admonished Donovan, whose own nerves were on edge by the various happenings in the house of mystery.

"I'm not," added the girl. "If ever I lived through this night, I quit. The house is haunted. I've had no right sleep. The noises I've heard - my god!"

"What noises have you heard?" demanded Lieutenant Donovan.

Fragments at night, when I'd be a-come home late. My god, I'd run off the way up stairs as fast as I could, get up I got scared to go out at night."

"Fragments where?" asked the officer.

"In those rooms where there wasn't nobody in 'em - on that floor mostly. That floor's the worst. My god, it's awful." "Didn't you ever tell anyone about 'em?" pursued Donovan.

"Sure! My good, dear! I tell Mr. Gustav half a dozen times!"

"What did he say?"

"He said I was just a nervous little girl afraid of the dark - that it was all my imagination, imagination! I suppose your Mr. Thorne's just down there, there dead in imagination. Ain't that how dead men was got up on? Look at his door as various - I suppose his imagination too. My god!"

Donovan turned to the others. "If you would find water together," he said. "You may go to the library and remove there the balance of the night - it will not be long now until daylight. There are officers at both ends of the house - you will be perfectly safe there."

"I wouldn't go back to my room alone if you'd give me Broadway," said the latest maid. The others appeared to find sympathy, for they moved toward the stairway and down to the library in a huddled group. There were no whispers.

Chapter V

Lieutenant Donovan, with Mackin and McGowerty, searched the house from top to bottom - there was not a room, or closet, or cupboard that they did not investigate, but their search revealed no trace of Miss Samara - the body, or the body of the room. They had searched so anxiously as though they had never rested.

"It's got me!" said Lieutenant Donovan.

Mackin shook his head. "There's some explanation," he said.

"Of course there is."

"And I intend to find it. Good night, Dad. I'm going to my room again."

The older ones walked into a pocket and produced an automatic pistol. "Take this, Mackin," he said, "you may be needed. I found it in the library table. And I'm going to send a couple of the boys up to see what you."

"What for?" demanded the young man.

"I can't be taller than Mackin - you wouldn't understand, but I've got my own reasons and they're good ones. I been getting two and two together this night - so they don't make eight or ten."

"You take care of yourself, Dad."

"Sure you can. That's probably what Thorne and



"Do you see?" asked Ganssler, and grabbed for the cart.

Satanstoe thought: "on New Year's eve."

Macklin shrugged. "All right," he said. "But remember that I'm working on a case, and will 'em not to interfere with me."

"They'll be under your orders, our boy."

Shortly after Macklin Donovan entered his room the two police officers knocked at the door.

"Make yourself at home, boys," he said as the two entered, and going to the table he brought open for them. "I don't want to talk, he said, after they had seated themselves and lighted their pipes. "I want to leave." They smiled.

Both the officers were sleepy and in a few minutes were half dozing. Macklin was leaning and thinking. He was trying to figure some explanation that would account for the mysterious disappearance of two living inmates of the house and a dead man, and he attempted also to follow the lines underlying his father's recent apprehensions concerning his own safety. If Terrance Donovan had known all that had occurred in the house and especially in Macklin's room there would be ample grounds for his fear—but he did not. He must know something else, then, that Macklin did not know. What was it that his father could not tell him and that he would not understand? The inevitable pain was in the back of his neck, which a redoubt slowly back and forth.

Macklin sat beside the table near the window, one of the policemen sat near the corner of the dining room, the other beside the other door across the room. Both the officers were dozing and Macklin was deep in thought when he was startled by a rattle "S-s-s-s" from somewhere in the night. He wheeled around, facing the two officers. Neither one of them had moved, and their deep regular breathing assured the fact that both were asleep. In the middle of the floor, between Donovan and one of the officers, lay a bit of paper rolled over a small splinter about which was either hard. Donovan rose and stepped quickly to the window. There was no one on any of the balconies. Then he turned to the door door which he found well locked and the key on the outside where he had left it. He moved on up to to avoid annoying the officers, and then he investigated both his room and the hall. Finally he returned to the room where the policemen still slept, and pulled the piece of paper from the floor. As he unfolded it he expected to find the usual message: "Be careful!" but that was something

different.

"Be **quitting** out of the room. Your life is in danger," it said, in the same crude printing that had marked the others.

One of the officers woke just as Macklin was stuffing the paper into his pocket.

"Anything wrong?" asked the policeman. "I thought someone was walking round the room, or was I sleeping?"

"You were sleeping all right," said Donovan. "and you can go back to sleep if you want. I'll watch."

"What's lost?" whispered the officer, looking at the note.

"Somebody like someone in Satanstoe's room," replied Macklin in a low tone, at the same time moving cautiously toward the door.

The sound they had heard was a subdued shuffling noise. Against the silence of the night, and coming as it did from the women room in which because had been murdered, it induced an impression of uneasiness that both men felt around though they were in danger and to separate. Behind Donovan came the policeman and as the former laid his hand upon the knob of the door the other officer withdrew. Observing their silence and their steady movements in a place he never followed them with equal speed. Together the three crept out into the hallway and moved cautiously toward Satanstoe's door, which stood open as it had since McGeography had broken it in. Macklin was at the head. He had reached the frame of the door and was on the point of looking into the interior of the room when a figure stepped from it into the hall. Instantly Macklin seized it—it was Goetz.

The leader was evidently surprised, but he remained cool. "Big problem, eh?" he said. "but I did not see you."

"No," said Donovan nervously, "but I saw you. I've been looking for you Goetz."

"Oh, have you, eh?" exclaimed the leader, in his best official tone. "I am very sorry, as in these things that I can do for you, no? I did not hear your ring—I have been in my room, no?"

"You're a damned liar, Goetz," exclaimed Donovan.

"Yes, sir?" replied the leader. "I was looking for you, sir. You must not return to that room, and be pointed along the hall towards Macklin's door."

"Why?" demanded Donovan.

"It is not safe, sir."

"Why is it not safe?"

"I cannot tell you, son, but please believe me, it is not safe," and then he turned to the officers. "Do not allow him to return to that room; I beg of you," he begged. "Even if you remain with him he will be a dead gang within five minutes after he crosses the threshold."

Marklin Donovan stood crying the louder closely. The man was evidently very much in earnest, but what motives prompted the warning? Donovan had his own opinion: the gang wanted to keep him out of that room for some particular reason and they were trying to frighten him out first by the wire and now by means of George Will, he wouldn't be frightened. He saw that the leader was out of breath and that his clothing was soaked here and there with sweat and seawater.

"Where have you been all night, George?" he demanded suddenly.

"Standing in my dream," responded the leader.

"Once more, you are a liar."

"Yes, sir?"

"Where is Miss Sansone?"

"In the next in her room, sir."

"Where is she? Answer me!"

"You will pardon me, Mr. Donovan, but I have some other duties to attend to. I must be going," and he moved toward the main landing to the upper floor.

"No you don't," cried Donovan, and grabbed for the man.

George dodged him and started to run. "Grab him!" cried Marklin to the officer who was nearest the leader. The big lieutenant jumped in front of the fugitive and held out both palms as hard as he could. It was a foolish move, for it left his chest exposed, but then who would expect a middle-aged leader to be so rough? George struck the policeman once without even pausing and as the man slumped to the floor the leader leaped across his body and made for the doorway. Just as he turned into a hallway door he gun and fired, at the same time leaping in pursuit with the second policeman at his heels. Marklin fired again as he reached the foot of the stairs and saw George disappearing at the same half way up. Donovan was young and active. He went up three more floors in less than a minute, but when he reached the top George was nowhere to be seen. Followed by the officer, Donovan ascended at a run to the fourth floor—on George. He searched every apartment there and even found the man's thin

bed in the roof, but that was fastened upon the inside precluding the possibility that George had escaped in the very, even had he had time to do so in the short interval of his last over Donovan.

Concluding, the two men returned to the third floor and searched it thoroughly. They were joined there by Terence Donovan and McGroarty who had been attracted by Marklin's shouting. Young Donovan accused the students of the last few moments to his father. "He just vanished—that was all—vanished," he concluded.

Donovan senior scratched his head. "As I've said about forty times that night, Marklin, it's gone and I've been wandering two years on the New York police force in a million funny things. If I hadn't provided my walls tonight and I've seen some of the hole off my knuckles I'd say the place was full of phony panels, but it isn't. Every wall was solid as every other one; there isn't an air space anywhere. And then, too, boy, I've even passed off the length and breadth of the house and the rooms and the closets and there's no spot unexamined by me!"—at a pause.

"It's getting me, too," said his son, "but I am going to look into it."

"You keep out of that room, though," said his father. "Don't come down to the library with the others."

Marklin shook his head. "I'll go to the room across the hall from mine—that won't bring me in," he said.

"There isn't any of us being used except the library," remarked the lieutenant with a smile. "You can take your choice of a lot of rooms—but I wouldn't care for Sansone's, myself."

"Not I, and Marklin—there's something funny about that room."

Together they descended to the second floor. "On your way down turn the light on the landing over, Dad," said Marklin, "I want to look up here in the dark for a while."

"Keep to your room," said now his father. "If it's dark they can't see me to harm me and I can leave from my doorway without being seen," explained Marklin.

"All right," agreed his father and walked down the hallway toward the stairs leading to the library while Marklin and the two officers turned toward the room opposite that which young Donovan had formerly occupied.

Marklin turned off the remaining hall light, leaving the second floor in utter darkness, then he

crossed the room with the policeman, reached as the light shone long enough for them to find chairs and then switched them off again. Before their eyes could become accustomed to the darkness he recrossed the room to the door and stepped out into the hall, making no noise. In equal silence he crossed to the door of the room he had formerly occupied. Stealthily he turned the knob and opened the door. The darkness within was solid except for the two rectangular spaces that were the windows; it seems that were but heavily visible against the deeper darkness of the room. As he stood just inside the door, listening, he thought that he discerned something moving on one of the balconies—just a vague suggestion of a figure without definite form or shape. It stirred his attention and held his eyes. Very softly he reached behind him and closed the door, leaving this one of the officers in the room across the hall—among him, might words as a light that would be sure to reveal him standing there in the doorway.

Drawing his pistol he moved slowly forward toward the window—nearly by touch he moved, fearing that the slightest noise might frighten away whoever haunted this balcony. He had crossed to about the middle of the room when, without warning, the narrow beams of a flashlight beam from the above fell upon the window toward which he had been creeping. Markin Donovan came up standing, with a gasp as his eyes stared upon what the beams of the flash light revealed beyond the window—a face peered close against the pane—the face of Saranov the dead man, with the blood upon his forehead.

Markin actually the face vanished toward the left and then the flashlight swung slowly about the room, moving closer and closer to Markin Donovan. His first impulse was to flee—there was something so sinister about the silent and the moving, was such use of that grisly light searching him out in the darkness of the chamber of mystery. Then he sought to keep ahead of it, but at last it drove him into a corner where he halted and held his pistol ready. An instant later the light reached his face and stopped upon it, blinding him. Then it was that he raised his weapon and fired point-blank into its heavy eye. Instantly the light disappeared.

A moment of silence was followed by a shuffling sound, coming, apparently, from the doorway of the door—then silence again. Donovan sprang through the darkness for the door door

knocking for the handle he found it, but the door was locked, and the key, which he had left upon the console, was gone.

(19)

Chapter VI

Slightly bewildered by the repulse with which the events of the past few moments had followed one another, and stung by the inexplicable mystery of the weird light that had blazed through the pane of a locked door.

Donovan limited briefly to his thought to adjust his reasoning facilities to the improbabilities of the facts that confronted them, and when a plan of action occurred to him.

Long since had the call of duty merged with, as been subordinated to, an overwhelming urge to discover the fate of the unknown of Maria Saranov, and to determine definitely her connection with the plane, that he might be her responsibility as the master of the murder of Maria B. Thom and the attempts upon his own life. Just how far she was involved with Goetz and Saranov he could not know, and now the discovery of Saranov had helped to open whatever theories he had formulated to certain extent to the connection existing between the three.

If Goetz and Saranov had been as league with one another, and there was no doubt as Donovan's mind less than they had been, it seemed unlikely that Goetz should have shot Saranov, while the conclusion that Maria had been guilty of the murder of her father was impossible of entertainment. Who then, had shot Saranov? Was Saranov dead? The fact that he had been shot suggested the face at the window but a moment since, would have under ordinary circumstances ruled that question definitely in the mind of no man and intelligible a man as Markin Donovan, but the circumstances of the past few hours had been anything but ordinary, filled as they had been with mysterious disappointments and other inexplicable and seemingly supernatural manifestations of various kinds.

What was Maria? Was Saranov dead? If Saranov were not dead, it was reasonable to assume that if he could find her, he could find Maria also, since the most natural supposition would place father and daughter near one another. But where to search for them? They had not left



Princess Narves spots again Demovoff and his company -

the Thorne home, yet they were not in the Thorne home. Already had the place been searched until there remained no unexamined hiding place where even a rat might have concealed a self-sufficiently from the搜捕者. There remained but a single terrible conclusion: all others were preposterous, unthinkable, so lying on the disbeliever.

Such judgments caused him that Sawney was not dead: that the face he had seen in the window must have been the face of a living man, and that that man was Count Boris Saranov. The thing to do, then, was to follow. He walked quickly across the room, raised the window, and stepped out upon the balcony. The apartment, or the room, whatever it had been, had disappeared to the left, so toward the left Donovan looked. There less away was the balcony before the windows of the dining room and hall, beyond that, a similar balcony, the balconies of the adjoining house. Below was the small garden between the rear of the house and the garage. Nowhere, upon the balconies nor in the garden, was anyone in sight, though he knew that surely beneath him were the policemen guarding this back entrance.

Suddenly, then he might not arrest the attention of the officers, Donovan climbed over the handrail and stepped to the rear balcony. There he paused for a moment, listening. He heard nothing other than the subdued night noises of the city. Consequently he made his way to the nearest balcony of the house next door. The window leading upon it was wide open. Within was darkness and silence. He threw a leg over the rail and drew himself into the interior, silently. His feet dropped softly to the floor and he stooped over. The boards were carpeted. There was a bed of various things here. Although he could not see, he guessed that the chamber was unfurnished, but it was not unoccupied. Of that he had starting proof immediately.

Peering out of the darkness at his left, near a low-taned whisp.

"Go back!" it warned. "In the name of heaven go back before they kill you!"

For just a moment Donovan hesitated, then he turned and moved quickly across the room in the direction from which the voice had come. He walked with his left hand outstretched before him, in his right he murmured:

"Who are you," he demanded, "and who will kill me?"

"S - I - H" warned the voice. "They will hear

you."

Simultaneously a door at the far end of the room opened revealing the figure of a large man silhouetted against the doorway of a lighted room across a hall.

"Is that you, Donovan?" demanded the man in the doorway.

Beyond him Donovan caught a glimpse of several men and a woman, seated or standing along a table. At the gruff question of the man in the doorway, those who were facing him looked up, while the woman, whose back had been toward the door, turned around. Suddenly Donovan caught but a fleeting glimpse of her face, as at the very instant that she turned a hand reached out of the darkness and powerful fingers seized his arm. He was jerked violently through an opening, the sides of which he could feel his body strike against as it passed between; and at the same time his pistol was wrested from his grasp and he heard the loud voice of the man in the doorway crying: "Aaren't you damn you will die!"

Then a door closed behind him and there came to his ears, hardly the muffled impact of a pistol. He tried to grapple with the man who was dragging him along, half backward, through the darkness, but the man was very powerful and the whole matter lasted but a moment before he felt himself swung violently around and pushed heavily backward into the dark, where he stumbled and then sprawled headlong to the floor.

As he fell two thoughts dominated his mind. One was that he must be very quiet for the purpose of discussing his intellect into the belief that he was wanted, that he might then take advantage of the other and overpower him; the other was the realization that the woman he had seen in the lighted room was Myrna Saranov.

It seemed to him that he had scarcely fallen before he heard footsteps in front of him, coming toward him. He heard a door fly open and with the click of an electric switch the room was flooded with light. He leaped to his feet then to grapple with his assailants and as he faced them he uttered an oath of astonishment and stopped back in utter incredulity. They were the two police officers whom he had felt but a few minutes before in the house of the late Mason B. Thorne and they:

Then he glanced hurriedly about the lighted room. It was the time which he had last occupied in the Thorne home, and from the window of

which he had stopped a minute or two since. He was surprised. The policeman looked at him questioningly.

"What happened?" asked one. "We thought we heard a suspicious gasp" or so here."

"No," replied Donovan, "I was just looking for something in the dark and stumbled over a rug."

"Where was the door - did you hear it?" asked the other.

"Yes," replied Donovan, "that's what I was investigating."

The officer scratched his head. "That's funny," he said. "We looked in here the first thing they we heard the door - we didn't see you."

"Perhaps I was in the balcony then," suggested Donovan, realising that they referred to the door he had heard as the light from the street, and that they must have entered the room immediately after he had left it by way of the window. He didn't want to tell them the truth, yet. He wanted to work out some plan, if he could, to learn the truth about Marvin Samsen before he was forced to expose her to arrest and all the else that would mean to her whether she was guilty of any wrongdoing or not.

"That's it," said the officer. "you must've been on the balcony. We just looked in as we didn't see any one, so then we searched the other rooms."

"Good nothing?" asked Donovan.

"No," he replied, "as far as I didn't want to find nothing. I've had enough of this part. I got so now I'm afraid to go in to find something every time I poke my head into one of these rooms. No! I don't know what it's good to be. That's what you are."

Donovan moved toward the hallway. Through the pall of mystery a light was breaking. What a world would he could never even guess, yet that a world distances several horrors seemingly不可思议 occurrences seemed probable, and it might lead to complete resolution. It might be bad or deeper mystery, and there was even a greater chance that it might lead to death, but that was a chance that every man in the service expected to be called upon to face with the persistence of duty.

In only one respect did the plan forming in his mind disregard the straight path of duty, and that lay in his determination to carry it through alone, notwithstanding the fact that he might need the cooperation of an ample force of police to arrest him. Call it love, call it infatuation, call it what

you will, it was this passion that he felt for Marvin Samsen that prompted him to formulate his plan of secrecy and carry it out alone. Whatever she might be, however guilty of attempts upon his life, love demanded that he give her every chance, and that he could not scruple if he shared his suspicions with the police, even though one of them was his father, for the best of policemen appear to commit all things under suspicion as guilty until proven innocent. If he let them, as he believed he could in his hiding place, they would arrest her with the others, and all would be known and all his work, if possible, lost. He discovered the degree of her guilt. If he found her guilty, he would himself stand, no consideration of love would save him from carrying on along the straight path of duty.

As he moved toward the doorway out of the office he pointed at the floor behind him.

"There's your gun," he said. "It must have dropped out of your pocket when you did the books."

"Yes," agreed Donovan, as he turned and recovered the weapon, still further startled by the fact of its return to him.

In the hallway he met his father coming from the third floor and called him aside. "I think I'm next to something," he whispered in a low tone. "Don't ask me any questions. I'll tell you what I want and then proceed as if you'll do it."

"Most," said Lieutenant Donovan.

"I want every light above the first floor that off and a well-made man will find anyone who may be listening into believing that all of you have gone down stairs. But stand just above or four men in the hall in the dark and have one door to each of the doors on this side - mine, Samsen's and his daughter's, with orders to ask anyone who comes out unless they give a counterpane that we'll open upon."

"How can anyone come out when there isn't anybody in any of these rooms?" demanded Lieutenant Donovan.

"I don't know," replied his son. "That's what I want to find out. The counterpane can be Miss Galtin. Whisper it to all your subordinates to your men - I will even had seen if I share with."

"What are you going to do?" asked the father.

"Never mind. I told you not to ask me any questions."

The older man shook his head. "Stupid," he said. "There's something about all this night's

business that I've got a head is looked up with something I can't tell you about, yet. If it is right at all, I'll get more to do with you than it has with Missus B. There, I wish you'd get out of this house and go home. I'll send a couple of the boys with you."

Young Donovan laughed. "I supposed you'd laugh," said his father, "but I wish you'd do it, blackie. I don't think your life is safe here."

The younger man placed a hand affectionately on his father's shoulder. "Don't worry, Dad," he said. "I can take care of myself, and even if I can't, you don't want a son of your name" away from his post, do you?"

Lamenting Tennessee Donovan turned slowly away. "The light'll be out on the main point in two minutes," he whispered, "in. God be with you!"

In less than the brief time he had signalled the upper floor of the Thors house were in darkness and Lieutenant Donovan with several of his men were descending to the first floor with considerable show of noise, about any house might think a prison number were descending than actually were. Behind him he left three burly policemen already guarding three doorways in the darkness of the second floor hallway. What had become of Markie Donovan, he did not know.

Chapter VII

Donovan stood at the foot of the stair leading to the third floor until after the light had been extinguished, then he quickly returned to them, placed them at one side of the stairway, and crept cautiously upward through the darkness and the silence of the deserted upper stories.

Consequently he paused or halted, then resumed his upward way until he came to the top floor, along the hallway of which he groped until his hands touched the thing he sought - the ladder leading to the attic in the roof. He climbed the ladder, looking above him with one hand. The lid was up and still fastened upon the inside. He was glad of that, since it indicated that those he sought made no pretence of using the attic as their emergency well place - a last resource to his plan, because it suggested that the conspirators would be less likely to think that he might use the attic

Underlying it - it was fastened with a few ordinary bolts and screws - he greatly narrowed the lid, revealing the noisy beams of a summer night above, and he leaned out and upon the roof. Then he searched the ledge as plain and crossed to a similar wooden on the roof of the adjoining house, just for an instant he hesitated beside it. "Would it be locked? He proved that it would not, then he stepped and stood as quietly as first, later with more ease. Yes, a way featured.

There was but a single way to overcome the difficulty - he leaped and grasped the lower edge of the lid with both hands. Then, with all the strength of his legs and back he gave a mighty upward heave. There was just a momentary sound of tearing wood as the saw-eyes pulled from their seats and the lid came up on his hands - the scuffle lay open below him.

He stepped and leaped in the opening aperture, but no sound from below suggested that the noise he had made in removing the lid had aroused the inmates of the house. It had been necessary to take the chance, though he had not done so without weighing the possibilities of detection which it involved. He knew the cases that he would have to make might be bad, but it would be brief. If those he sought were in the house below, to be fully believed them to be, the chances were that they were on the second floor and if they heard the noise at all it was unreasonable to believe that they could leave it - or that they would leave it within the house. It would come down to them, but very faintly, if at all - they would not attribute it to its true source, unless the upper floor was occupied or he had been followed. Either of these were possibilities that he must face.

With a slight shrug he lowered himself through the small opening, groped with his feet for a ladder, found it, and descended to the floor below. Again he paused, listening. It was very dark - he could see nothing. He had learned this night that he was pined against successful enemies who had all the advantage of knowing the ground thoroughly. That very instant someone might be watching him - on the next the flick of a pistol in the dark might put a period in his existence.

He stepped boldly forward in where he knew the stair should be - for he assumed that the house was, more or less, a duplicate of the Thors House next door, in which he was correct. He found the stair and descended them to the next

flow, stopping occasionally to listen - but on the whole moving rapidly. His sense of loss to the stairway leading to the second floor. Here he moved with greater caution - creeping downward slowly and with the utmost stealth. Below him, on the second floor - was a dimly diffused light and the subdued murmur of voices. Almost at the foot of the stairs he paused upon listening. Gradually he leaned forward until he caught a glimpse of the hallway to his right. Upon the opposite side of the hall, only a few feet away, a door stood slightly ajar. The room beyond was lighted and from its narrow came the murmur of voices that he had heard.

Swearing his ears he sought to catch the words themselves, but there came to him only a jumble of sounds. He rose more slowly. He wondered how long it would be before one of the occupants of the room emerged from it, or an absent one returned. In either event he would be immediately discovered, and he did not wish being discovered until he had learned what he wished to know. Drawing his pistol, he crossed the hall and stood close to the door, which was ajar about an inch. More he could hear.

A man was speaking; the voice was coarse and uneducated. He spoke in the American tongue. Young Donovan made mental note, and he was glad now that his father had insisted upon his learning it. He had never understood why so much stress had been laid upon language in his education - he did not understand now. He merely was glad that he had learned American as well as French, Spanish and German. There had been other things in his education that had seemed as a way between knowing, for example, and asking was accomplished so that his father had insisted upon his getting proficiency in. He had always thought a merely a strange fancy on the part of the older Donovan that he should be master of such things, and have a better knowledge of the history of the Old World than of his own. He did not think that thought now - he was too much upon listening.

"There is a matter among us," the man was saying.

"Or there designed the wires of the house to inform," suggested a second voice, "then, you know, it is very possible and would explain much." And the sound of the second voice Donovan noted his speaker's, for he recognized the tones - they belonged to Givens.

There was some gaudiness, as though of dissent from the suggestion, and then the first voice spoke again. "The girl - how long have you known her, Givens?" There is something about her that reminds me of someone else. Are you very sure of her?"

"You ought to be sure of me. I have been working with you for more than a year," said a hoarse voice. "It was Nance."



Detrol. "A voice hardly learned to speak."

"The Comaster recommended her," came a man's voice. "Someone - beyond that I know nothing of her. Until tonight I have had no reason to suspect her, but now - by God, someone is doublecrossing us - someone tried to kill me. She is the only one who could have had a motive."

"What motive?" demanded the gruff voice of the first speaker.

"The hell is in love with her!"

There was a long silence and then, suddenly an exclamation from him of the coarse voice. There was the scraping of a chair as bare boards and other sounds indicative of a small man, rising suddenly to his feet. Donovan leaned and placed an eye close to the keyhole, peering in the thus circumscribed range of his vision, there of the occupant of the room. Seated at a table, his back

partially toward him. Maria Saranova was seated at the table beyond which he knelt, upon the opposite side of the table from her he could not recognize. One of them was Sazanov, who, seated, was looking up at the man at his right – the one whom Dzerzhevsky had heard was from his class. The latter a man, heavily bearded, foreigner, leaned forward across the table and shook a trembling finger at the face of Maria Saranova. The fellow appeared astonished with rage.

Dzerzhevsky could not see Guseva, nor the other occupants of the room, if there were others, except a man's hand and part of a coat sleeve resting on the table to the right of the bearded figure that faced Maria. There might be a dozen men in the room, for surely that blackish Dzerzhevsky knew to the certainty, and he sincerely hoped that however many constituted the gang, they were all in that room – it would have been most extraordinary to have had one of them coming up behind him at that moment.

He wondered what it was all about – the obviously overwhelming excitement and anger of the man facing Maria Sazanov – the trembling, shaking finger – the man almost at the tables in the room. Presently the bearded one found his voice. "Bye!" he exclaimed. "I know you now." He turned quickly to the right and left toward the others in the room. "You are fools!" he cried. "We are all fools, stupid. The revolutionaries have tricked us easily. Do you not know who she is?" Do you not know who she is? – his voice rose almost to a shriek, as he turned upon the girl again. He leaned so far forward that his pudgy finger almost touched her face as he pointed at it in her.

"You are Sazanovitch's daughter?" he cried, vehemently. "Think of it!" he exclaimed the other – the daughter of Prince (Michael) Sazanovitch, the acknowledged leader of the revolutionists, whom she had met more than a year to one winter only." He turned upon the girl again. "You deny it?" he demanded.

"Have I denied it?" she asked. Her voice was level, her eyes dignified, but Dzerzhevsky saw that her cheeks were pale.

"You know the face of your?" the man continued.

The girl nodded. The man faced Sazanov. "The responsibility for this is mine, yours, that matters not," he said. "Is it possible that there are two eyes among us?"

"There may be two, Dzerzhevsky, but I am not one

of the two," replied Saranova, whose dark, massive brows wrinkled in nervous anger. "The tricked one, as he did all of you, but she did not try to kill any of you. She tried to kill me, the —" he applied a final stroke to her. "For the safety of the cause, she must die. Let me shoot, by her permission!"

Dzerzhevsky held up a restraining hand. "Let that thing be stated out in order," he said. "Have you anything to say, Princess?"

"What could I say to you, Dzerzhevsky, betrayer of your superior trust, murderer, violator of your fellow countrymen, traitor, that would allayance you from the treason that you reached the moment that you recognized me? I am ready tonight, as I have always been, to die for Russia and the empire!"

"Then die!" cried Dzerzhevsky. Rushing angrily, and nodding to Saranova.

The latter rose and as he did so he drew a pistol from his pocket. The girl rose too and stood facing them bravely, her head high. At the same instant Mikhail Dzerzhevsky pulled the door aside and stepped into the room just as Sazanov raised his weapon. The secret-service man fired first. Sazanov, grasped at his breast, slumped forward upon the table – and then slipped to the floor.

The other occupants of the room turned surprised eyes upon the murderer – there were five men and the girl. When followed happened so quickly that it could have made but a confused impression of curved words, shots, darkness and the sound of running footsteps upon those who participated in the rapid action of the ensuing scene.

Dzerzhevsky uttered an exclamation of surprise as his eyes fell upon Guseva.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, suddenly, "it is she!"

"Who?" demanded suddenly, "yes?"

"Yes," cried Dzerzhevsky – "the princess" and then, for "Princess" for "the Republic" he exclaimed, and leveled his pistol.

Dzerzhevsky snatched his own weapon and pulled the trigger – with no result, for the empty shell had passed when he had shot Saranova. Simultaneously Guseva drew a gun and fired, dropping Dzerzhevsky in his tracks. Maria leaped past Mikhail to the French bench, the door and plunged the room into darkness. Sazanov grasped him by an arm on one side and an instant later he was seized by a second person upon the other. Dzerzhevsky was groaning, his voice cried, "Stop them! Kill them!" There was the sound of heavy shots on bare boards – and

furniture pushed about and overturned. Marlin's eyes widened. Donovan's air "Come quickly!" she urged in a whisper. "You can trust me; you must trust me!" He left himself pushed along through the darkness, turning here and there and then that.

Suddenly he felt hands seize him from one of the darkness before, as he collected with an assembly here.

"Hold!" commanded a deep voice, and then "I got you, give a hand here!" Heavy footsteps sounded, running. Then, someone switched on lights and the astonished Donovan found himself in the second floor hallway of the Thorne house: a heavily policeman grappling with him, while two others were running to the entrance of the first, and on one side of him was Marvin Saracov and on the other, Goetz.

The officer who held him looked back. "Why didn't you give the commissioner?" he demanded.

Terraced Donovan, leaping up the stairs from the heavy door in a maze, came down the hall in a run. "Hang on to those two!" he ordered, releasing Goetz and the girl. "Good boy. Watch, you got 'em! That's the boy!"

"I didn't get them, though," replied young Donovan, apologetically. "they got me!"

Goetz was making "You needn't worry about it now, Lieutenant Donovan," he said. "We won't check you again: there's no emergency for us."

"I'll say you won't!" exclaimed Terraced Donovan, "not if I know myself, you won't! I've got you, now, and I'm going to keep you!"

"There's something about this, Dad, that we don't understand," said Marlin. "Goetz and Miss Saracov just saved my life. But before we go out to my father we've got to get the gang near door. He turned to Goetz. "Will you show us how you get back and forth between these houses so easily and so quickly?"

"Certainly, sir," said Goetz, "but I doubt if you will find your men now. We got the man who wanted. The other three, Perloff, Katschik and Schickel do not come for much - they were only made working for him, and as far as I know, they have reasons for it as reasons."

"Who is he, sir, anyway?" demanded Marlin Donovan of the father.

"Wait until we come back from next door and I will tell you everything," replied Goetz.

"Go ahead, then," commanded Lieutenant Donovan, "but I'll go with you, and keep a good



"The other three, Perloff, Katschik, and Schickel
... were only made working for him."

hold on you into the bargain; you may be all right, but you're too damned slippery to suit me."

Goetz laughed. "All right, Lieutenant, I don't know that I can blame you," he replied.

"But you stay here and we don't let women, don't get away again," Lieutenant Donovan ordered McGonaghy, "the rest of you come along with us!"

Goetz led them into the room, heavily occupied by Marlin. The door that had been locked now opened, as the light revealed after Goetz had reached them on. Stepping into the door the hallways behind a clothes rack in the end of the door, and pushed up into a panel swung slowly inward. Passing through the opening they found themselves in another room, the door of which Goetz opened, leading them into a chamber corresponding with the one they had left. Here he switched on the light, crossed the room to a door which he opened and pointed to a darkened room across the hall.

"There's where they were," he said. "We are in the lower men door to Mr. Thorne's."

The police crossed the hall, entered the room and switched on the light. Saracov's dead body lay upon the floor, where it had fallen. With the exception of a few pieces of furniture, none of which was overturned, the room was vacant and unoccupied. Goetz appeared puzzled. He turned to Marlin Donovan.

"I thought Dravoff was mortally wounded," he said. "I expected to find him dead."

Donovan nodded. "The other men have helped

him to get away, but they can't be far. You'd better search the house, Dad."

"You'll find a trap door in the rear stairs of the basement," Goetta told them. "That opens onto a tunnel leading to the garage. They've gotten away by that time. If you find Walter Drevoff, let's take him too."

"Why?" demanded Lieutenant Donovan.

"It was Drevoff who murdered his 'Thorn'."

"You hope follow up as far as the garage and then report back to the library," the police officer instructed his sons. "Blackie, we'll take Goetta to the library now and have his story."

(R)

Chapter VIII

As Blackie Donovan entered the Thorn library a few minutes later with Goetta, Narva Savorev, and his father, he spoke pleasantly to the Glanachs and the Thomes. Percy Thom returned his greeting cordially, while Elizabeth, cradled and weeping, was too buried in her own grief to notice anyone. Governor Glanach nodded indifferently and looked in another direction, while Mrs. Praskovya Glanach, looking directly through him, failed apparently to perceive either him or his situation, when a slightly increased elevation of her prominent olive forehead signified to the contrary.

"It is strange," she whispered later to her daughter, "that the Thomes should have tolerated such people, but then poor Marion could not have known. It is Percy's fault—he must have gotten a fever in his mother's, her grandfather, you know, had nothing absolutely nothing. All blood will tell always! One can see it on that Donovan person, common, very common."

She was interrupted by Lieutenant Donovan's gruff voice. "Now, Goetta," he was saying, "if you've got anything to say I want to tell you first that it may be used against you."

"I understand," replied the father. "In the last place, Lieutenant Donovan, it may help you to understand western horror from the first if I tell you that this young lady," he indicated Narva Savorev with a respectful inclination of the head, "is the daughter of Serenow. She is the Princess Niava, daughter of Prince Michael Semopovitch, whom, Blackie, you will recall."

Tatiana Donovan's face betrayed the astonishment the statement reflected.

As you know, the Crown Prince Alexander of Russia was brought to America in custody to preserve him from the wrath of the revolutionists, who assassinated the balance of the imperial family the day following his removal from the palace. Only Prince Semopovitch and the emperor's wife, Paul Drevoff, beside yourself and your wife, hold the secrets of the whereabouts of the Crown Prince.

"Drevoff passed the stolen plans, but he kept the secret of the Prince until recently, using his knowledge to raise money from Prince Semopovitch, the head of the monarchist party. For the past three years he has been the unknown power behind the unknown government; this has reduced Russia to bankruptcy and starvation. Recently the power of the monarchist party has increased tremendously, and it now contemplates the hope of Russia and the only means to the eventual rescue that has far to long held the fate of the country in their blood-stained hands."

The hope of the monarchists lay in the young Crown Prince, though only a few knew that he still lived and only one, Prince Michael.



"...the revolutionists...hold the fate of the country in their blood-stained hands!"

Somopomka, knew where and under what name and disguise. But Drzewoff knew, too, and we have been watching him closely. For this purpose the Princess Nerwa and I passed across to the islands off Drzewoff and his fellows. We learned that Drzewoff had observed a great audience and so further as he brought together the remnants from all parties and formed them into the so-called Republican Party. A conspiracy was planned for next month when the present government was to be overthrown and a republic proclaimed with Drzewoff provisional president. The next step was to make all the remnants governments, announce an empire and crown himself Emperor of America.

"There was every possibility for the success of his bold play. The greatest obstacle lay in the existence of a rightful heir to the throne: the Crown Prince would continue as ever-point success to his power. Drzewoff, therefore determined to wrench out the young Prince Alexander and kill him: but Drzewoff was clever. Really, he trusted no one, and made no mistakes. Used tonight our eyes we who were close to him realized his true intentions. His party consisted of many leaders all of which must be appeased. He claimed, therefore that he was coming to America to find the Crown Prince and to persuade upon him to return to America as the first president of the new republic: thus winning the confidence of both the laboring masses who had joined his forces and the outward his republicans as well.

"The Princess Nerwa and I were sent by the true revolutionists to watch him, for Prince Somopomka, naturally, loved the man's every move. We had the greatest difficulty in locating Prince Alexander, due to the fact that his presence calling is such that he was forced to assume an identity different from that which we were told would reveal him to us. None of us knew him by sight: not even Drzewoff, while the Prince himself is ignorant of his true identity.

"We have searched for months. Tonight we found him. Drzewoff got the first shot presently meaning, but did nothing to us. Saveroy clanked a silver manner that Mr. Thorne was murdered, as did I, though I think Drzewoff may have told Saveroy earlier in the night what I do not know.

"Tomorrow, Drzewoff, I do not need to tell you who the Crown Prince is, not the pretense that every true American sees you for your faithful

service to the Empire and the dynasty. I should like to be the first to salute my former emperor, but there is one who better deserves that honor." Once again he turned and bowed to the Princess Nerwa. "As his father had given his fortune, so she had dedicated her life and raised a many sons for the sake of the Imperial House of America."

"The Princess Nerwa smiled and inclined her head toward Gorm, then she turned to Macklin, Drzewoff, and, turning her before him, took his hand in hers and raised it to her lips. "Yes, I salute you!" she said.

Drzewoff, grasped her arm and raised her to her feet. He bent her toward with enthusiasm. He drew her close to him and there an arm about her waist, as he turned toward Gorm.

"What is the meaning of all this display?" he demanded.

"It is the thank your majesty," replied Gorm, "Leutenant Drzewoff can mean you of all this."

"I think you're all gone crazy," snapped Macklin Drzewoff, "and anyway all this has nothing to do with the business that matters are now who murdered Master S. Thorne and why? There is a price deal made to be explained, Gorm: you I want the history of the past few hours: not the ancient history of America."

"Very well, Majesty."

"On the Majesty!"

"Yes, Maj: you see?" answered Gorm with a smile. "Yesterday morning you were followed to and from Lieutenant Drzewoff's home. That was evidently Drzewoff's first direct clue as to your identity. He thought you a spy employed by the monarchists. When he found who you really were he told us that he had discovered that you were about to report us to the United States Government. Of course such a step would have effectively ruined all the plans of the Republic. He and you must be killed. Princess Nerwa and I tried to warn you, though we had no idea who you really was. Saveroy urged the men that we slipped under your door, and that was to lure you in your death. Poor Mr. Thorne charged to pass through the hall as the instant you were exposed and the bullet that was intended for you killed him. It was fired by Drzewoff from a sliding panel in the wall of the Princess' closet. Come up now and I will show you."

He led the way to the second floor and into the room occupied by the Princess.

"That closet," and he stepped into it "is connected with both Saranov's closet and Saranov's room by passage similar to the one I showed you in - oh - Mr. Donovan's closet." He smiled as he pronounced the name. "There is also a similar connection between Saranov's closet and the house next door, thus giving entrance to that house from all three rooms on this side of the hall."

"Now look here," and he raised a small panel in one end of the closet, revealing a breast-high aperture a few inches apart that opened into the hallway opposite the head of the stairs leading to the library. "Drevoff told Mr. Thorn from here he entered through Saranov's closet. The Princess, realizing that you were to be shot, hardly granted a note of warning; passed back of Drevoff through Saranov's closet to the house next door and thence to your closet, at which there is a small lock-out panel similar to this. When you went to your dressing room, she entered the outer room and placed the note on your table where you discovered it."

"After she left your room to return to her own, she heard the shot and thought it was you who had been killed. She screamed, and though she was in the next house you were able to hear her scream distinctly because the chamber to be opened is open; windows in the light and air that which opens between the two houses."

"Saranov, too, thought that you had been killed. Possibly he shared surprise when he discovered that it was Mr. Thorn whom Drevoff had mistaken by mistake, for he certainly must have been surprised and shocked too, since Mr. Thorn was to have financed the stroke that they expected would result in giving Austria a new government."

"What did my father have to do with it?" demanded Percy Thorn.

"Your father was very much deceived. He thought that he was making mankind safe his money, but he was only playing into the hands of unscrupulous traitors. I do not know all that they told him, but you may be sure that he is one of it was much."

"Go on with the story of what happened here that night," directed Terrance Donovan.

"Well, the Princess had definitely going back to her room without being observed by Drevoff, and she only did reach it just as you were about to have the door broken in. She was sure you had been killed - Mr. Donovan, and she told me that she almost betrayed herself when she discovered

you alive."

"After you all went to the library she returned to the house next door to watch Drevoff and the others. It was in the library that I at last realized your true identity, for I knew that the reputed son of Lavranov Donovan was an ally. Crown Prince Alexander of Austria I immediately learned to the house next door and acquainted the Princess with the fact. She had just learned something else from Drevoff, one of Drevoff's tools. Immediately after Mr. Thorn had been killed Saranov had gone to his room as had most of the others, and from there he had entered Mr. Donovan's room from the house next door and killed Mr. Donovan's pistol beneath the mattress. The Princess barely had time to reach the room and remove the weapon before the police searched the room. From then on she and I had to watch you and Saranov, and Drevoff almost constantly to prevent them from finding a way to kill you."

"As late as determined that we must tell you of your danger, but when the Princess attempted to do so in the hallway Saranov discovered her and interfered. From then on he was suspicious and we had difficulty at even getting the little notes of warning to you."

"Saranov attempted to reach your room and stab you to death with a dagger belonging to the Princess. I tried to shoot him from an upper window, but succeeded only in hitting the dagger and knocking it from his hand. Then, a few minutes later, the Princess discovered that Saranov was planning to enter your closet and shoot you from the small panel. Distracted, she knew not what to do. It was then that she shot Saranov from his closet as he was about to enter it on his way to your closet."

"To shield herself she ran to Drevoff and told him that one of the police had killed Saranov. As there were papers on his body that Drevoff did not want to fall into the hands of the police he sent Kolobek and Salach to carry Saranov's body into the house next door. When they had done so it was discovered that Saranov was only wounded by a scalp wound, and he soon recovered consciousness."

"At the same time that Saranov was shot Drevoff was in your closet waiting for Saranov. He heard the shot, feared surveillance, and fled as you caught the panel in your closet door. He did not want to show the effect of the shot, but ran for the safety of the adjoining house."

"The last time we wanted you, Saranyu was on his way again to get you, and the Princess had to drop the rats through one of the breathing holes from the dark-linen on the third floor through the ceiling of your room. At the same time I made my way to Saranyu's room, determined at last that I must tell you face to face of your great danger. It was then that you caught me, or?"

"And I'd like to know how you disappeared so early," said Desoreva.

"Through a panel in the dark-linen on the third floor, or – it is very easy, if you know the house."

"I'd like to know who had all these secret panels and dropped you into the house," said Percy Thorne.

"Your husband, Mr. Thorne," replied the barber. "Like any other man, he had a score for arrangements. He also served romance and adventure. Most of his attempts were miserably bungled, but he chose to work under the greatest combination of mystery – Petroff and Katschik were skilled cabinet makers. It was they who did the actual work."

"Go on with what happened in the house," said Marklin.

There is not much more to tell that you do not already know. You quietly killed Princess Nariva when you fired at the light shining from your door. She had been looking there, expecting either Saranyu or Drevoff, or both, to come again to search of you. She duly discerned someone on the balcony and turned the light upon them. It was Saranyu, as you know. The light frightened him away.

Then she turned the light on you to make sure that it was you and not Drevoff. When you fired at her you missed her head by inches or so and struck the door, leaving you might fire again. She had already removed the key from the outside lock by the simple expedient of reaching through the small aperture in the door – the same one through which Drevoff fired, and that she used to throw the flashlight on Saranyu and you.

"When you followed Saranyu into the house next door, was it who dropped you into the closet and then backed you to your own room in the Thorne house? You had a narrow escape that time, or?"

"I guess that is all, Lieutenant," Goetz concluded. "I have tried to cover every point, and now would you explain to us – or his majesty who he really is?"

"Was a moment," said Terrance Desoreva. "Not

so fast. A week ago I could have told him, for I thought I knew. Now, I am damned if I know. We got a letter from Prince Michael then. It told me something about his fear of a plot to assassinate him, and the way to watch him very close in the same was almost open for him to return to Aurora."

"When I read the letter to my wife she fumed and when she came out of the house she called a stroke. She not only called partially a couple of times more, and then she told me something that I don't know whether to believe or not, when the condition of her mind is taken into consideration. She kept crying, 'I can't let him go, my little Michael, my little Michael.' And then, just as broken heart, she told me that he is our son, that it was the Crown Prince who died on the ship years' even as I always thought that it was our own boy that died."

Goetz appeared dumbfounded. "We must get the truth at any cost, my friend."

"What are you?" demanded Marklin.

"He is Count Mazaraki," said the princess. "He was a lieutenant in the Guards in the time of the revolution, and very loyal always to the imperial family."

"Can we not go to your wife at once and explain the necessity of knowing the truth?" insisted Goetz. "The fate of Aurora hangs on the balance – the happiness and prosperity of countless millions of people."

Lieutenant Desoreva hesitated. "She is about to death's door," he said.

"But your promise to the emperor?" Goetz reminded him.

"Very well, we will go," the lieutenant said, but whether we shall question my wife or not depends upon the decision of the doctor.

It was already daylight when they started the coach that had been summoned to take Terrance Desoreva, Count Mazaraki, Princess Nariva and Marklin to the bedside of Mrs. Desoreva. The police lieutenant and the count occupied one of the cabs, Nariva and Marklin the other. As they drove off Mrs. Peabody Gloucester turned to Percy Thorne with a sickly smile. "And so, thank," she said, "that you have been mastering the future Emperor of Aurora without sacrificing his true identity! But really, didn't you assure, Percy, his distinguished and capable ones? Quite accessible and very important."



grouped and his husband plot the murder of the American 00041102

In the second cab Macklin Donovan and the Princess Marie sat in silence that was gradually broken by the man.

"Before I knew that you were a princess I told you that I loved you," he said.

"Before I knew that you were an emperor I told you that I loved you," she replied, "but now we must forget all that. You are how impossible it is."

"If I am an emperor nothing should be impossible. If I am only Macklin Donovan the son of an Irish policeman, though, that will make the difference, for how could such a man be the hand of a princess?"

"I pray no God that you are only Macklin Donovan, dear," she whispered, "but then I can show you how easy it is to wear the hand of a princess."

He took her in his arms. "Emperor or Mack," he said, "I'm going to marry you."



Donovan said to her "I'm going to marry you"



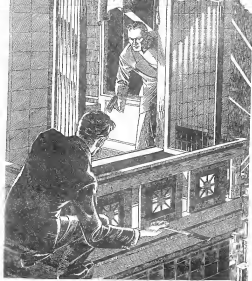


THE SCIENTISTS REVOLT

by EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS



The SCIENTISTS



On the balcony outside, a dark figure is peering through a window, looking at a scene.

REVOLT

BY
EDGAR RICE
BURROUGHS

Macbie Donovan, American, plunges into the greatest adventure of his life, high in an amazing tower of scientific mystery where killers vanish into thin air

PROLOGUE—2000 A.D.

A STILL pass in the leaded glass of the Port Home Palace atop the tallest building in Astoria looked to the study floor as the bullet embedded itself in the ebony paneling behind the Science Ruler.

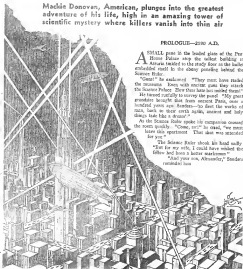
"Gee!" he exclaimed. "They must have tracked the mezzanine. Down with machine guns they attack the Science Palace. How dare they have dared them!"

He turned rapidly to survey the panel. "My great-grandfather brought this from ancient Persia, over a hundred years ago. Slanders—to dent the works of man, back to their earth again, ancient and holy things take this a dream!"

As the Science Ruler spoke his companion crossed the room quickly. "Come, sir!" he cried, "we must leave this apartment. That door was intended for you."

The Science Ruler shook his head sadly. "But for my wife, I could have wished the fellow had been a better workman."

"And your son, Alexander," Slanders reminded him.



"It might make it easier for him," replied the Scientist. "It is I they fear. My people hate me, Sanders—my people whom I love and to whom I have tried to be a father. But these I cannot blame. They have been deceived by him. It is toward those who know the truth, who stand closest to me, and for whom I did the most that I feel my bitterness. Every day they are deserting me, Sanders—the rich and the middle-class. I am sure of only a few of you—I could count my friends tonight upon the fingers of one hand."

Madison Sanders, Minister of War, bowed his head, for the Scientist had spoken the truth and there was no doubt to be made.

It was the first of May preceding that historic second which wiped the existing dynasty from the rule of America. For a month the Science family had virtually been prisoners in the summer palace upon the outskirts of the Capital, but they had been somewhat and their personal safety had seemed reasonably insured until the morning.

For years the voice of the agitator and the malcontent had been heard with increasing emphasis throughout the length and breadth of the Country. "We are driven to violence" was the motto which they preached. During the early weeks of April the Capital had been a hotbed of revolution which had rapidly merged into the threat of anarchy. The people had grievances, but no leader—they had only agitators, who could arouse, but not control.

And then had come that first of May, when the rubble from the law quarters of the City, drunk with liquor and wild blood lust, had descended the walkways at the head of the revolution, and screaming for blood and loot, had marched upon the Science palace with the avowed intention of annihilating the Science family.

All that day they had howled and looted about the palace, held in check only by a single military unit which had remained loyal to the Scientists—the Foreign Corps, recruited among foreigners, and with few exceptions, completely alienated.

After a moment's pause, the Scientist spoke again.

"What do you suppose started them today?" he asked. "What brought this mob to the palace?"

"They heard last night of the birth of your son," replied Sanders. "They pretended to see in that boy a promise to what they are pleased to call The New Freedom—just as they say we have, no?"

"You think they were the lovers of my wife and son, as well as my life?"

Sanders bowed. "I am sure of it, sir."

"This must be prevented at all cost," said the Scientist.

"I had thought of removing them from the palace," replied Sanders. "but that would be difficult, even were it possible to move your wife, which the physicians assure me must not be done. But there is just a faint possibility that we may be able to remove the

body boy. I have given the matter a great deal of thought, sir. I have a plan. It stands risk, but on my other hand, to prevent the boy to remain in this building another twelve hours would, I am confident, prove fatal."

"Your plan, Sanders, what is it?" demanded the Scientist.

FROM the past month the officers of The Foreign

Corps have been quartered within the building. Several of them are married men, and their wives are here with them. One of these women, the wife of a Lieut. Demoreau, gave birth to a son two days since. She is a strong and healthy young woman and could be moved without materially endangering her health. For all the people know, she may have had twins."

The Scientist observed his house. "I say," he said, "but how could she pass out with the infants? His son may escape."

"But they do daily, sir," replied Sanders. "The building is filled with visitors. Not a day passes but that several desert to the street. His son alone passed. Only a minute can save The Foreign Corps from absolute extermination. It would not seem strange, then, to the revolutionists, should Lieut. Demoreau desert to them, for the sake of the safety of his wife and children."

For several minutes the Scientist stood motionless, bowed head, bowed in thought. Then "Call Demoreau," he said, "and we will send for this Lieut. Demoreau."

"Perhaps I had better go myself," said Sanders. "The fewer who know of what we intend, the safer will be the success."

"I have implicit confidence in Demoreau," replied the Scientist. "He has served me faithfully for many years."

"Indeed, sir," said Sanders, "but the common is one of such treacherous moments that I would be unwise to trust you repose in me, were I to remain alone—sir, I fear Demoreau, I wouldn't him, I have no confidence in him."

"Why?"

"I could substantiate no charge against him," replied Sanders, "so I should have preferred changing him ago, sir."

"Paul?" exclaimed the Scientist. "Demoreau would do for me. Bring him, please."

Sanders moved toward the radio call, but with his hand upon the switch he turned again.

"I beg of you, sir, to let me go alone."

The older man nodded with an imperious gesture toward the radio call and Sanders gave the signal. A few moments later, Paul Demoreau, the Scientist's aide, entered the chamber. He was a slender, dark man, apparently in his early thirties. His eyes were large and shining and set rather far apart, with, in marked contrast to them, were his thin, upturned nose and his straight and bloodless lips. He seemed in absence the will of his master, who stood watching him closely, as though for the first time he had

Maurice Bennett



head their way upstairs to a room on the second floor.

"When they returned to the din again there was a hint of moisture on the linoleum of both men.

"How did you find me?" asked the younger man, through the department?

"Yes. I telephoned Wilmington. I am about told me where you were."

"I am still on the Third Ave. It's got a passing. No one in the department believes Mr. Thorne to be more than a mediocre photographist, with mediocre, very mediocre, brains."

"We haven't been able to identify a single record of contact with him, yet we are sure that there is a bunch of Americans well whom he has inspired, changed, often severely. His work is so much revealed as we, and deeply worried too. We think they are after the old man's money, and even that they may discover him to discover some secret that will try him before the Federal presence."

"Thorne's mother angle in the whole case—sure! thing we haven't missed yet, even lately, but I'm going to get it. I think I'm closer to it now than I have been at any time during the past month that I've been on the case. We came down from the summer place yesterday on Mr. Thorne's yacht and things seem to have rightened up some way from the

moment we arrived. There's a sort of openness and air of mystery that wasn't prevalent at Thorne's office."

"About the only new element that seems to have been introduced into the office is Thorne's brother, a fellow named Greaves, who was out at Thorne's office. None of the rest of the new servants seems to count much that I can see, but this fellow Greaves I don't like. He's always pussy feeling. I can scarcely take around without finding him behind me. I don't like to suspect me and it worries me awfully."

"The other people, besides myself, are Mrs. Glanville and her daughter—the Peabody Glanvilles of Philadelphia, you know—and John Thorne and his daughter. As far as the Glanvilles are concerned they are out of the running entirely—but the Thorns are different. They're from Arizona. He's supposed to be a political exile. I haven't a thing on him, but I've tied him in the same folder with Greaves. The girl, his daughter, is all right—very much all right, plus."

Lieutenant Turner's comment looked up quickly at his son and smiled. "The brain proved both of the older man, and looked a little."

"Don't be too sure about anybody, Mackie," cautioned the father. "And, mean that, are you sure about young Thorne?"

"He was the best friend I had in New Harvard," replied the son. "He asked to have me assigned to this case because he and I could work together better than anyone. He has done everything to aid me. Not a hint as to the bigger forces who I really am. Thorne was afraid to even let you know that my father is a state-police lieutenant, for that it might cause suspicion as to my motives for being there. They don't put in a return telephone long from San Francisco and that we're busy with money. Say, if Mrs. Peabody Glanville of Philadelphia knew the truth she'd throw a tantrum."

"The older man's face colored, reflectively. "I'll say the word!" he said—"if she knew the truth."

"Well, Dad," said the boy, bluntly, "I've got to go—there's the hall of a job like this and yours, too, our personal interests wouldn't count."

He threw an eye about his father's shoulder reflectively. "Look up Dad, he said 'I'm sure that I'll pull through all right. Keep me posted, and if I can see her when she's convenient, I'll come.'"

OUTSIDE he walked the hall-boat, to the usual two times and shot right in an elevator to the traffic platform. Here he waited as he was and a moment later entered in the restaurant area, watching the swirl of air traffic about him drop away as his own could see into the blue in response to his brief command "Thorne Thorne."

Below, the great river of Lower New York, with its half-mile high buildings, bounding thirty-two millions of people, drew his attention as it always did. Any moment was the greatest sky of Earth there, unlike Europe, and Asia, seemed had truly moved, and not as a century had war come to America. Not had any

intent that I have never acquired."

"I didn't know that you had ever acquired any filthy habits, Auntie. But there it is: it was nephew who knows his own worst, these days."

The angular little woman moved imperceptibly toward the doorway. Near it she turned and faced her brother. "Mama," she murmured, "I shall not remain to be punished further."

Her brother laughed maliciously. "See you in dinner, Eh," he called after her.

"You can smoke a smoke now, George," said Percy to the tall blond.

"I have not smoked anything," replied the girl with a frown. "I do not take your Aunt Eugenie seriously."

"No one does except herself," replied the young man.

"I wish you would cease smoking altogether, George," repeated her mother. "Narciss never smokes, although she comes from a country where the custom habit has been fully received, and she seems to be just as happy."

"But I do not enjoy smoking," declared Miss Narciss. "I'm sure that I should smoke if I did enjoy it."

The tall Miss Glanville arose from her chair, too quickly, and walked to Devereux's side. "Do you think I smoke too much, Mabel?" she inquired, perversely, placing a hand really upon his arm.

Miss Glanville bowed. "Oh, those children!" she exclaimed. "It doesn't make any difference what I think, or what anyone else thinks, as long as Mabel thinks it's all right." If she sought to suggest, were not that the way one might converse?

Mabel's Devereux was vastly fit it was for an instant, but he brought it off quickly. Percy Thorne appeared bored and irritated. Could look neither, Miss Peabody Glanville would have assumed the dominance of a parent, but she did not even pass that Percy Thorne was looking at her.

Devereux patted George's hand where a lay upon his sleeve. "I'm sure you wouldn't do anything too much, Gene," he murmured.

Staring out a quick glance at his daughter, caught her eye, and darted a nervous and very meaningful look toward Miss Glanville and Devereux. Narciss Thorne merely raised her delicate brows.

A little later the three women went to their rooms to dress. Anna retired last; presently and was soon followed by the older Thorne. Then Percy Thorne turned to Devereux.

"Look here, Mabel," he said. "What is there between you and Gene? I want to know."

"Nothing, you old fool, except the Devereux silliness," and the speaker laughed. "Can't you see that she doesn't give a smacker's dose for me—that she's her mother who is aging her on?"

"I think she's in love with you," asserted Thorne. "I want to see 'em when they learn the truth about me," said Devereux.

"You may be right about the old lady—she's after

me! for he looks well, but Gene—never! She's true blue, Mabel. She's old and dingy, and it just about does me up to see her falling in love with one of my best friends."

"Well, you ought to know your friends. Perhaps they're not so susceptible for Gene you might not be being 'em around."

"Get the remedy! I'm in love with her and you're not—at least you say you're not, though I don't see how you can help being—and I don't want to beg her, and I don't want to play second fiddle."

"Don't worry, Percy. It won't be for long now, unless I lose my point. Things are coming to a head, maybe quick. I have an idea that I'll leave a bit before I'm really lower still, and it may be that I can find away there in a hurry and not give up your love affairs with my filthy notions."

"It isn't the money, Mabel—she's in love with you, I'm afraid. I've got money enough, as far as that's concerned, but she can't even see me when you're around."

"You mean when Mabel's around," corrected Devereux. "I saw her smiling over at you and talking up against you there at Thorne's Golden and in the yard every time Mabel was looking."

Thorne shook his head. "I wish you were right," he said, "but you aren't. Come on, let's go up and dress." He arose and walked toward the door.

"I'll be up in a minute—you run along," replied Devereux. "I want to look around a bit."

THORNE walked and ran up the stairs that, descending from the second floor, opened into the large library. When he had passed Devereux walked quickly to the doorway leading to the hall. As he did so the heavy hangings before a doorway on the opposite side from the library moved, but the hall was dark and Devereux did not see the movement. He had scarcely reached the doorway when his attention was attracted by the sound of light footsteps on the stairway above. Turning quickly to see Narciss Thorne descending. She looked down at the instant that he turned, but immediately resumed her downward course. Had he surprised her? Would she have turned back had he not done so and then? He wondered.

"Ah, Mabel Devereux!" she exclaimed. "I thought everyone had gone to bed now. I did not expect to meet anyone," she flushed prettily.

He recalled now why she might have walked to her back screen—she was in disguise. A very beautiful creature that sat off her dark, beautiful hair—singly. Devereux stood with her hand upon the second post as the girl descended—she took toward the hall doorway.

"I left a little boy down here," she explained. "It contained a few trunks that I should not care to lose. Ah, there it is!" and she crossed quickly to the chair in which she had been sitting and picked up a small gold bag. As she returned to the stairway, where Devereux still stood, she glanced on the lower step

"You had better hurry and dress for dinner, Mr. Deveraux," she said, with her pretty accent, "or you will be late!" As she spoke she played with the little gold bag, opening it and closing it. Deveraux was aware of a very delicate and delightful fragrance about her.

"What a wonderful perfume," he remarked.

The girl smiled and opened the bag again. "Yes," she said, drawing a small jeweled phial from the receptacle and holding it toward her face, "it is very wonderful. The Science Master of Acadia before he was assassinated gave it to me—in a friend of my father's. There is no more like it in all the world. It is very old and has never been used, yet it permeates whatever it comes in contact with. I just took it from my pouch to-day—you did not notice it before?"

"There was too much smoke in the room, I guess," he replied. Suddenly he placed his hand upon hers. "I wanted to say this afternoon, but it couldn't very well all be true, that I am glad you do not smoke."

For just an instant an eager light shone in her eyes, and then the door bell.

"I am glad," she said gently, "if I have pleased Master Deveraux."

"Pleased me! Oh, Mirra, you must know—" he drew her suddenly close to him—"you must have seen that I—"

Quickly she placed a veil, with pale across his lips. "Stop!" she cried, and her eyes looked frightened.

The heavy hangings upon the opposite side of the hallway moved. Deveraux's back was toward them.

He clung to her. "I love you!" he cried almost angrily, it seemed. "You must have known it—you must have! Why can't you love me?"

She broke away. "I do love you!" she exclaimed; but there was horror in her eyes and in her voice as she turned and fled up the stairway.

Deveraux looked after for a moment with puzzled eyes, and then, putting his pale hands across the back of his neck, he slowly ascended the stairs toward his room.

"The more you see of him, the less you know about him!" he whispered as he closed his bedroom door behind him.

IN a room at the opposite end of the house and upon the other side of the hall Miss Glanville's maid was arranging her mistress' hair while Miss Glanville sat before a dressing table upholstered her face. "At your age I should have had him long before this," said Miss Glanville was remarking. "The girl of to-day lacks ability of contribution in such matters."

Her daughter clasped her fair shoulders. "I don't want him," she said. "I want Perry. I should think the Thorns would be enough."

"Conceive you are vulgar!" her mother retorted. "And say, if I marry Mr. Thorne I can expect nothing more than my share rights in the estate of

his death, since Perry will inherit the bulk of the fortune, while Mr. Deveraux, being no only child, I am told, will inherit his father's entire estate—a matter of some hundreds of millions."

ACROSS the hall from the Glanville Manor, Simon stood before her mirror, gazing. In the doorway of her door stood John Simon. He, too, was gazing.

"You had him then," he said in a low voice, accusingly.

The girl made no reply.

"Do not look at me," said Simon—his tones were well modulated, but ugly. Then he stepped back into the closet and closed the door.

Mirra, her hand upon one side, listened for a moment; then, almost fearfully, she pressed the back of her hand to her eyes, as wet as pain. "I can't! I can't!" she murmured.

CHAPTER II

Murder in the Dark

IT was after one o'clock the following morning before they returned from supper and dancing at one of the city's popular sky gardens. Groves entered there. As she passed her Mirra Simon raised her brows questioningly and the latter replied with an almost imperceptible inclination of her head. Neither act could have been noticeable to other than specially trained eyes—such as Deveraux's. It was his habit now to give such trivial occurrences and this one did not escape him. He was puzzled and vexed—vexed with himself that he could still doubt Mirra Simon's connection with the band of conspirators that he felt he was at that closing in upon their works of seemingly fruitless labor.

He had always suspected Simon and at first had assumed that the Assembly's daughter was criminally connected with the band of which her father was a part. Reasoning from that premise it was not strange that he should seek to ingratiate himself with the girl; that through her he might gain the knowledge he sought. To this end he sought her companionship. The work had been that not only had he been unable to contact her with any of the activities that he believed chargeable to the band under investigation, but he had fallen hopelessly in love with her.

After a few moments' desultory conversation in which no one noticed interested Miss Thorne announced her intention of retiring—a suggestion that evidently met with the approval of the others, who, with sleep "dead" rights," ascended the stairway to their several chambers.

Fifteen minutes later Groves made the rounds of the lower floor, turning off all the lights with the exception of a small night lamp in the front hallway and a second small lamp in the library, which was the last room to which he gave his attention. Instead

of returning to the servants' stairway at the rear of the parlor, which he should have used in going to his room on the fourth floor, he ascended the main stairway from the library. He left a light on the landing about half way up the stairs, but shut off all others in the hallway on the second floor, which was, however, slightly illuminated by the light from the landing.

There he paused to be poised for a moment in the center of the hall, apparently listening. He looked quickly first in one direction and then in the other, after which, seemingly satisfied, he ascended the second flight of steps to the third floor where were located the apartments of the family. Ordinarily a small passenger elevator was used to reach the upper floors, but this was temporarily out of commission while undergoing its annual summer overhauling during the absence of the family at Three Gables. From the third floor a single flight of stairs led to the servants' quarters on the floor above.

Tom stammered was near the rear end of the third floor hallway. Directly opposite it was a small, dark closet wherein were kept a various assortment of brooms, brushes, caps, dresses, women's cloakers, and similar paraphernalia.

Green's hand was out but a single light in the third floor hall, walked in the foot of the stairway, paused, listened, and then, turning quickly, opened the hall slightly, opened the door of the dark closet nearest it and closed the door after him.

MACKLIN DONOVAN had gone directly to his room, removed his dinner coat, he and collar, and sat down to smoke and read at a table near one of the open windows which overlooked the small garden at the rear of the house. Outside the window was a narrow iron balcony identical with those outside every other window on this floor, both front and rear. These balconies did not connect with those adjacent to them, being separated by a space of about three feet. Except for the lights of the city far below, and the great iron tower a mile away, the posthouse might have been on a country estate.

Macklin's back was toward the open window and he was facing in the direction of the door leading into the hallway. He was not particularly interested in the book he was reading—it did not hold his attention. It was better than nothing, however, in keeping him in pace the great task of the household (unhappy, for he had a suspicion that something might transpire themselves that would prove of interest to him and to his chief in Washington.

He had been sitting thus for about an hour, when he again alighted upon a folded paper lying on the threshold partially inside the room. It had not been there a moment before, of that he was positive. There had been no sound—the paper had not been there one minute—the next minute it had. That was all there was to it.

In the instant that he discovered the thing he

leaped quickly toward the door with the intention of throwing it open; but before his hand touched the knob he thought better of his contemplated act and, instead, stooped and picked up the paper. Whoever put it there did not want to be seen. Perhaps it would be better to burn it, temporarily at least.

Standing near the door he opened the message and read its contents, after which he was glad that he had not yielded to his first impulse to rush into the hall in an effort to discover the messenger. The note was in a feminine hand and read: "Darling: Please come to my room at quarter past ten. I have something to tell you. Be not come before," and it was signed with the initials "D. S."

Donovan's right palm went to the back of his neck in a characteristic gesture of perplexity. It wasn't like Norrie—the wasn't the sort of girl that would ask a man to her room at that hour of the morning—unless—ah, that was it! She wanted to tell him some thing that she didn't dare tell him before Susan. It must be that. It must be something urgent. What- ever it was it was all right—he could trust her—and that he was quite sure. He glanced at his watch. It looked about five o'clock to quarter past. He went to his dressing room, fastened on his collar, adjusted his tie, and slipped into his dinner coat.

Before leaving he seem to be turned to his dressing room which he took a needle point.* He was on the point of slipping it into a hip pocket when he hesitated, and then, with a sigh, replaced it in the drawer and closed the drawer.

Walking toward the hall door his gaze fell upon the table. He came to an abrupt stop and, whirling, took a hurried survey of the room, for, propped against the reading lamp was a square blue envelope that had not been there when he had opened the room a few minutes before. Searching it up he saw his own initials crudely painted upon its face. The flap, which was but lightly sealed, he tore open, revealing an ordinary paper correspondence card upon which was printed in the same hand a single word—**REWAIKI!**

A frozen smile broadened on his brow. His hall door was locked. He glanced toward the open window, and then quickly at his watch. It was exactly quarter past ten. Slipping the blue envelope and the card into his pocket he opened the door in the hall door. As he led his hand upon the knob the faint report of a needle pistol came to his ear, followed almost immediately by the sound of a body falling, and the piercing shriek of a woman.

THROWING the door open Donovan stepped out into the hall and ran quickly toward the head of the house—the direction from which the trouble had come. At the head of the stairs leading to the library he stumbled over a knotted loop covered by a dressing gown. A few feet farther along the hall was

*A needle point is a small, pointed weapon like an officer's moustache. It has a long, cylindrical shaft, being sharpened at one or both pointed ends.—Author.

He yanked the first suspect of a needle point and old dagger thrust into the floor, then. On the left wall he saw the glowing count of a woman like a woman in the wall here.



Nathan Brown's room on one side and the other of the door occupied by the husband. He called out with his daughter.

From the position of the body it was impossible to see the door. The door was closed. The door could have been closed from Nathan's room, but not from the Glendora room. The door could have been closed from the doorway of the room occupied by John Brown. But from the direction of the door of the Glendora room, opened it could not easily have been closed from Nathan's. And the door had opened not more than to look by one standing outside with a. Some of these things came to him as he stepped at the moment, to be verified by an examination later. But there all the three looked down him.

He had to go to the door, he called out that the needle had been used, and he called out that the needle had been used.

He called out that the needle had been used, and he called out that the needle had been used. He called out that the needle had been used, and he called out that the needle had been used.

What, how, I asked, he said, his voice still in the air.

He called out that the needle had been used, and he called out that the needle had been used. He called out that the needle had been used, and he called out that the needle had been used.

He called out that the needle had been used, and he called out that the needle had been used. He called out that the needle had been used, and he called out that the needle had been used.

confusion, but they were not looking at the body in the door—they were fixed on Madeline Donovan.

Mr. Glensack now came from her room, and behind her was Genevieve, while servants were pouring from the upper floors.

"Who is it?" demanded Percy Thorne.

Donovan stepped and drove back the collar of the dressing gown. A accusatory look from the lips of Miss Glensack. "My dear!" she cried, "It's Maudie!"

"Father!" exclaimed Percy Thorne, dropping to his knees beside the body. "Who could have done it?" he cried. "Who could have done it?" and he looked around at them all standing there—quiescently, solemnly.

Donovan knelt beside Percy and turned the body over on its back, opened the dressing gown and the shirt and placed his ear above the heart. Presently he arose. They were all looking at him, eyes filled with suspense. Donovan shook his head, sadly.

"Mr. Thorne is dead," he said. "Gentles, go to the phone and call the police. Percy, we shall have to leave the body here until they come. You had better go and prepare your aunt, and prevent her coming down until after the police have been here. I shall remain here. The rest of you may go to your rooms, or not, as you wish. There is nothing that anyone can do until after the police come."

Percy Thorne came to his feet like one in a trance and moved slowly down the hall toward the stairs, leading to the third floor where was his aunt's room. Genevieve ran quickly down the stairs to the library in the telephone. Donovan looked about him. What was Miriam Saran?

"Mrs. Glensack," he said, turning to that lady, "will you kindly stop to Miss Saran's room and see if she is all right."

Miss Glensack crossed the hall and knocked lightly on Miss Saran's door. There was no response. She knocked again, more imperatively. Still no response.

"Try the door," directed Donovan. It was locked. Donovan turned toward Saran. "Where is your dagger?" he demanded. She was no longer the mere young society man. Instead, her voice cut like steel, and in it was the ring of steel.

Saran was pale. "She must be in her room," he replied. "Where else could she be?"

Donovan motioned to a couple of frightened footmen. "Break down the door!" he commanded.

As they stepped forward to obey, the door of Miriam Saran's room opened, revealing her standing there, fully dressed, and breathing rapidly. At sight of Madeline Donovan she uttered a little cry that she tried to smother, and her eyes went very wide.

"What has happened?" she cried, when she heard her voice. "I heard a noise—I must have dreamed. Who is it?" and she looked down at the still figure on the floor. "Oh, no!" she cried when she recognized the features, "it cannot be—it cannot be Mr. Thorne—it must be a terrible mistake!"

"It was a terrible mistake, Miss Saran," said Don-

van, adding, his eyes steadily upon her.

CHAPTER III

Mystery

THE studio police chap came, and, as Fate would have it, under the command of Lieutenant Terrence Donovan. The body of Miriam Thorne was removed to the small room off the library—a room that he had used for a study and in which was a large couch. It was laid upon the couch, next an open window. Then Terrence Donovan returned to the library. Mrs. Glensack was there, and Genevieve Percy Thorne sat on a sofa beside his aunt, who was weeping softly, trying to comfort her. Saran stood before the cold fireplace smoking a cigarette. Genevieve remained beside the door to her mother's study. There were three fairly police officers and some of the maids and housemen also, the latter standing near the hall doorway as though momentarily expecting to be needed.

"Now," said Terrence Donovan, "I want to hear about this. Who saw the shooting?"

"No one," replied his son, "so far as I have been able to discover. The killing occurred at precisely a quarter past two," he glanced at Saran, but the latter was looking at the ceiling. Miriam was not in the room. "I was the first to reach the hall. I found Mr. Thorne lying where you found him, but on his face. It was necessary for me to turn him over to examine him for signs of life—otherwise the body was not disturbed."

Neither Lieutenant Donovan nor Madeline had given any indication of their relationship or that they were even acquainted, owing to the fact that the latter was covering a rule necessary to the successful prosecution of his investigation and that exposure at this time would doubtless vitiate all that the Department had accomplished.

"Who do you think might have had reason to wish to kill Mr. Thorne?" continued Lieutenant Donovan.

"I believe that no one could have had any reason for wishing to kill him," replied Madeline. "To my knowledge he hadn't an enemy in the world and I never heard him in altercation with anyone." He paused. "It is my belief, sir, that the needle that killed Mr. Thorne was secured by another." As he spoke he looked directly at Saran whose eyes were now upon him, and was rewarded by a slight narrowing of the other's lids. Somehow this chance that had gone home. Saran knew something.

"Who followed you into the hall after the needle was found?" asked the police official.

"I did," said Saran. "Mr. Donovan was standing over the body of Mr. Thorne as I came from my room. The hall was but dimly lighted, but sufficiently to permit me to see Mr. Donovan. He was looking something in his hip pocket as I opened the door of my room." The accusation was obvious and that it was

thoroughly understood was manifest by the amount of quick thinking of herons by several of the occupants of the library.

Marklin smiled. "You'd better have me searched, lieutenant," he said.

"I expect to be being searched or questioned in either by this officer," pronounced Saran.

"Why?" asked Lieutenant Donovan.

"Because you are his father," replied the American.

The effect of the second surprise was almost equal to that of the first. The idea of Miss Prudence Gluscock dropped like an anvil, then she smiled independently.

"The count must have lost his mind," she whispered to her daughter. "The very idea—Marklin Donovan the son of a captain policeman!"

Genevieve turned to a police officer standing behind them. "What is the lieutenant's name?" she asked.

"Terrance Donovan, ma'am," replied Officer McGroarty.

Miss Gluscock appeared slightly groggy, but she was still on the mark. "Reflexions!" she exclaimed. "He is of the Donovan of San Francisco!" She looked dubiously, and evidently at Officer McGroarty.

"Sure, ma'am," said he, "or it wasn't me that was after you? He wasn't—it was him over there," he nodded to the direction of Saran.

Terrance Donovan eyed the American. "What makes you think this man is my son?" he demanded.

Saran hesitated. He seemed to regret that he had made the charge. He looked dejectedly and spread his palms before him with a shrug. "One of the women at Thorne Gables told my wife. I gave the matter no thought—naturally behind it, in fact, until you arrived last night. Then I realized."

"How does it happen that you know my name?" asked Terrance Donovan.

SARAN was evidently surprised by the question.

He searched his memory carefully, but it was too late to remedy it. He sought to cover his confusion by a show of anger.

"It makes no difference how I know," he snapped.

"I do know—and I don't propose permitting the suspicion of my friend to escape because he is the son of a police lieutenant. I demand that some other officer pursue this investigation."

Terrance Donovan smiled. "You are right," he said. "I think Captain Butler is here now—I just heard his ship arrive."

He does not deny that Marklin is his son," whispered Genevieve to her mother.

"Preposterous," said Mrs. Gluscock, but she said it in a small voice—she was whispering. "I always mistrusted him," she added; "he never expressed an opinion having the air of one in the captain's house, as it were."

At this juncture a large man in the uniform of a captain of police entered the room. He nodded to Lieutenant Donovan and moved to his side. The

two men whispered together a few words for a few minutes, then Captain Butler pointed a large forefinger at John Saran.

"Do you accuse life Marklin Donovan of the murder of Miss Thorne?" he asked.

"I cannot say so," replied Saran; "I merely relate what I witnessed."

"What else did you witness besides what you have told Lieutenant Donovan?"

"After the party came, and while they were carrying Mr. Thorne's body down stairs Mr. Donovan went to his room, took a piece of paper from his pocket and burned it."

Marklin Donovan looked at the speaker as if surprised Saran had spoken the truth, but how he knows?

"Perhaps," continued the American, "he may have hidden his pistol at the same time—provided at least that it was by him that Mr. Thorne. If the pistol is not in his possession now it may be in his room. He should be searched and so should his room."

"There's a dandy hint," granted Officer McGroarty. "I've known Marklin Donovan since we was knee high to a cockle at St. Paul, and there isn't a manly hair on his head!" He spoke in a whisper that was audible only to the filaments.

"Then you admit that he is the son of that person there," accused Mrs. Gluscock. "I am not in the least surprised. I have said right along that he had a low face."

Genevieve Gluscock looked at her mother as well-worn admonition. "I think he's wonderful," she said. "and I have changed my mind about marrying him." She could not resist the temptation to retort to the other women's past unbecoming efforts at match making.

"You will return to Philadelphia today," suggested Mrs. Gluscock.

Captain Butler was searching Marklin for a weapon—which he did not find.

"Now we'll take a look at your room," he said. "You come along!" he pointed at Saran. "The rest of you stay here. For that we can leave the room, McGroarty."

Lieutenant Donovan glanced quickly around the library as he accompanied Butler, Saran and Marklin toward the doorway. "Where's the banker?" he demanded suddenly.

"Why, he was here just a moment ago," replied Percy Thorne; "perhaps he's stopped into the next room," and he pointed to the study where the father's body lay. "Grieve!" he called, but there was no response.

One of the policemen stepped into the adjoining room. "There isn't a soul in there," he said.

"Find him," directed the captain, as he led the way up the stairs, with Marklin Donovan at his side.

UPON the left of the landing hall way up the stairs was a tall pane glass. Reflected in it, just like an image, Marklin saw the shadowy figure of a woman

dart into his room at the far end of the dimly lighted hall. He was upon the point of telling Father what he had seen when there flashed to his mind the realization that all the visitors in the house, were now, away to the library before, and that one was Martin Sarve.

An instant later they reached the head of the stairs in full view of the entire hallway. There had been no opportunity for observation beyond his room before. The hall had been locked when he had passed through it after the officers had come, but now the bolts were crinkled, the only illumination coming from the landing on the stairway. Who had unlocked them, and why? Possibly when he had just been released in the mirror explained why.

The three men walked directly to Macklin's room, which, like the hall, was in darkness, although Donovan distinctly recalled that the lamp on the reading table had been lighted when he left the room. Just inside the doorway was a porch. Macklin pointed the switch and the room was flooded with light.

"I suggest that you make a very thorough search," said Sarve.

"When I want any suggestions from you I'll ask you for 'em," replied Father, calmly. Sarve selected, nothing.

"Get a gun, Macklin!" asked the captain.

"It's in my dressing-apparatus on the left," replied young Donovan, withdrawing the article of furniture with a jerk of his thumb.

Captain Father crossed to the dresser and opened the upper left hand drawer, in which he rummaged for a moment. "We got him, Macklin," he said.

Macklin Donovan knitted his brows. "It was there at the instant that Mr. Thorne was killed," he said. "I had just placed it there."

The police officers continued to ransack the dresser, and then each of the other places of furniture in the two rooms and the closet. Fathers could be that a pistol. Sarve was even evidently maintaining a desire to speak, only with the greatest difficulty. At last he could hold his peace no longer. "Why don't you search the bed?" he demanded, eagerly.

Macklin glanced quickly toward the bed, the covers at the foot of which, he noticed for the first time, were disarranged as though they had been pulled out from the side and hastily pushed up again. Father crossed to the bed and pulled the covering aside. One by one he removed and shook them. Finally he turned the mattress completely off the springs. Sarve was almost standing on top of it. There was no weapon there!

Young Donovan was looking at Sarve, upon whom he kept his eyes as much as possible, and he saw the look of black suspicion that crossed the American's face.

All the time that the search had been going on Donovan had been awaiting the discovery of the person he had seen enter the room only a minute ahead of them. As every inch and cranny was examined without revealing any hidden position he was reduced to a state

of impotent fury regarding that which Sarve had revealed when no pistol had been discovered beneath the mattress. Walking to one of the windows he looked out and examined the road along the front of the posthouse—there was no one there.

They returned to the library just as the officers who had been directed to find Green entered the room. "I've searched the whole place, Cap'n," he said, "as far as I can't know. The posthouse is being watched outside, front and back, as there can't be no one gone out."

Father nodded. "Then he must be inside," he said. He turned to the company in the room. "You'll all admit that there's something peculiar about this case. I can look you all up as witnesses, but I don't want to do that. Right now there isn't a time against any body, and so I'll give you just chance of remaining here under guard until morning, or gone to the station. Under the circumstances I don't make any suggestions, and I'm stretched a point in what you may have. Which will it be?"

They unanimously chose to remain in the house, under guard. "We give your rooms and stay there." He walked from the room, bidding Lieutenant Donovan to follow him. "I left 'em here," he explained in a low voice, "because I think this is the best place to trap the murderer. It's one of 'em, but I don't know which one. Don't let any one leave the house and say that that damned body. See you about eight o'clock," and he departed.

CHAPTER IV

Gloomy Disappointments

AS the guests started toward their rooms Macklin found himself beside Mrs. Chase and Genevieve. "It has been a terrible experience for you," he said. "I hope that it has no effects. It is just as if any sorrow does not hesitate to call upon me."

Mrs. Chase's face wore perceptibly. "The only sorrow you can make me, young man, is to prevent me to occupy the humiliating position in which your experience has placed me," and she swept majestically up the stairway.

Genevieve passed beside him. "I am sorry for you, Mr. Donovan," she said, coldly, "but you brought it upon yourself. One should not pretend to be what one is not," and she followed her mother up the stairs to their rooms.

Percy Thorne, waiting for them, followed them. As he passed Donovan he stopped and put a hand on the other's shoulder. "I want you to know, Macklin," he said, "that I think Sarve is a damned liar."

"Thanks," replied Donovan. "I know you wouldn't believe such a ridiculous charge."

"But who in the world could have done it?" asked Thorne.

Donovan shook his head. "I wish I knew," he replied.

He remained a moment, after the others had gone,

to speak to his father—to ask the latest news concerning his mother, only to learn that there had been no change, then he, too, searched the stars toward his room. As he reached the top step of the door of Marco Serna's room again and he saw her standing there. It was evident that she wanted to speak to him. She held a finger to her lips, signifying silence, at the same time motioning him toward her. He had taken but a couple of steps in her direction when the door of Serna's room opened and he dropped into the hall. Simultaneously Marco stepped back into her room and closed her door.

"I thought your room was at the opposite end of the hall, Mr. Devereux," said Serna, with a slightly amused expression.

"We can should know it better than you," replied Mark.

Serna smiled. "Keep away from my daughter's room," he said, merrily.

Mark bowed. "She has been absent from the library since the police came," he said, "and I feared that she might be endangered. I had wished to stop and inquire. Perhaps you can enlighten me."

"My daughter is quite well, thank you," replied Serna, and as Devereux bowed again and turned toward his room the other watched him until he was out of sight.

Again in his room, Devereux threw himself into an easy chair beside the table, and sat pondering the circumstances of the night. That which occupied him most was a mad effort to discover some means of removing all suspicion connected with the attempt that he believed had been made upon his life by Maria Serna. He did not want to believe it. Yet, try as he would to reach another, the conviction remained unshakable that she had attempted to kill him to his death, and that by chance only Marco Toren had approached her door at the very instant she had expected Devereux.

It made him waste to even think it, and so he would not at such times upon a new tack in a haphazard effort to explain her various and wholly strange upon some other hypothesis. But he could not explain away her evident surprise when she had discovered him alive, he could not explain why she had been the last to come to the hall after the firing of the fatal bullet, he could not explain why she and Giovanni alone of all the company had been absent from the library during the police investigation. His judgment told him that she and Giovanni and Serna were at the bottom of the plot to kill him, yet last just now when she had attempted to speak to him Serna had prevented.

Then there was the memory of those almost magic words that still were ringing in his ears: "I do love you!" and recollections of the fever that had been in her eyes as she walked the cry and fled up the main way. "What did it all mean?"

Altogether his eyes glided upon the floor at the bottom of the closet door, beneath which a piece of paper was slowly being pushed into the room.

CASTIGLIOSLY Devereux rose from his chair and tip-toed across the room toward the closet. He made no noise as he moved—more still his hand fell upon the knob and then, at the same instant, he flung the door wide. The closet was empty!

He crossed it and a moment every inch of it. It was absolutely empty except for a couple of suits that he had hung in it the day before. Later all the other closets in the house it was, unconnected with order as the same height that the rooms now passed as various ornamental closets.

Now crawling on his hands with great pretidings, Devereux came from the closet and looked the door, leaving the key in the lock. Then he unrolled and perked up the lot of folded paper. It bore but a single word—the same word that the other message had borne—"HUSH!"

As he stood before the closet door feeling the lot of paper over and over, he searched his mind for an explanation as to the means by which it had been thrust from under the closet door without being in the closet. Suddenly his attention was attracted by what seemed to be a shadowy sound from one of the balconies before the windows on the opposite side of the room.

Consciously he raised his eyes. The light from the reading lamp illuminated the table, the chair beside it, and a little area of the floor surrounding the fire, leaving the balance of the room in a subdued light.

Beyond the table was the window from which the sound seemed to come. As he watched he thought that he saw something move upon the balcony just outside. He remained very quiet, apparently scrutinizing the paper in his hand, his eyes bravely fixed on the window. Again he saw the movement without—on Serna's hand clacking.

There was the bang of a revolve gun. The hand disappeared. The circle of moral on stone. A clack. Silence.

Devereux looked for the window, threw it open and stepped out onto the balcony. There was no one there—there was no one on top of the white balustrade. A soft hush came from below, "There's the devil's wing up there," it demanded. His answer was one of the efforts left to guard the rest of the house.

"I thought I heard a noise," said Devereux. He said nothing about the figure on his balcony, for he had determined to thrust out the mystery of that night, unwatched.

He stepped and examined the stone floor of the balcony. There lay the dagger. He picked it up and carried it into his room. He could hear people running through the hall, aroused and alarmed by this second disturbance. He heard the gruff, low tones of the police, and the high, frightened voices of women. He carried the dagger to the table and held it close to the light. It was a weapon of foreign make, its silver grip bound with cords of gold. A faint fragrance was wafted to his nostrils. Quickly he

raised the jelly-door to close and locked, then he let the weapon fall to the table as his hand dropped limply at his side. His face was drawn and white—the belt was coated with Karen's bloodstains.

For a moment he stood there, then he turned and walked quickly to the door, opened it and stepped into the hall. He wanted to see who was there—or, more particularly, who was not. They were all there—Sarna, Marlowe, the Glanacha, servants and police. Pretty Thorne came down a moment later, his arm behind him. Graves stood by almost. Marlowe seemed able to know anything and Donovan kept silent as to what had transpired upon his balcony and within his room.

Tired, sluggish, nerve wracked the occupants of the parlour returned were made to share rooms. Macklin threw himself upon his bed, fully dressed, after switching off the light. He did not intend to sleep. He wanted to wait until the police retired, if it ever did, that he might, in comparative safety from discovery, go to Sarna's door and listen. He had an idea that Graves was there and he wanted to make sure. But he was very tired—almost exhausted—and he dozed before he realized the danger. It could have been he but an instant before his sleep was shattered by a peering screen.

MACKLIN leaped from his bed and ran toward the hall door. As he did so, from the closed door on the opposite side of the room a panel swung in the dark and a needle went by his head. As he had no weapon he could not return the blow, but he sprang to the window and turned on the light. Then he wheeled and faced the closed door. It was closed and the key was still upon the outside, where he had left it. He roused the room and tried the knob—the door was locked!

Examining the hall again he found it filled with servants men and terrified women. Everyone was talking it over. Only the police were later normal, and even their group with a hat on edge.

Lieutenant Terrance Donovan was among them.

"What's missing, Macklin?" he demanded of his son.

"The father, John Sarna and his daughter," replied young Donovan.

"The father is not on the premises," said his father. "What is Sarna's room?"

"Three," said Macklin, leading the way. The others followed in their rear.

Lieutenant Donovan opened the door and looked for the light switch. His son stopped just him and looked at, flooding the room with light. "Look!" he exclaimed, and pointed toward the door.

There, on the floor, his body in the room, his legs extended into the hall, lay John Sarna upon his back, blood running from a needle wound in his forehead. Marlowe Donovan turned and ran toward the hall. "Miss Sarna?" he cried. "Something may have happened to her."

His father followed him, and again the others

remained behind. Marlowe knocked upon the girl's door—there was no response. He knocked again—louder. Silence. Motioning the others each by stepped back, pushed, forced himself against the door with all his might, striking it with a shoulder. The lock and keeper gave through the wooden frame and the door swung inward. A single lamp burned upon a table. The room was empty, as were the dressing room and bath and closet.

Marlowe called the girl's name aloud: "Marlowe! Marlowe!" but there was no response. He looked quickly at his father. "What do you make of it, Dad?" he asked.

The older man shook his head. "It's got me," he admitted, "but we'll find her—she must be in the house."

"That's what you said about Graves," his son reminded him, "but you haven't found him yet."

"I'll search the house myself this time," replied Terrance Donovan. "I want to have a closer look at Sarna's room and the bath, then we'll look it up, and I'll go through the place."

Together they went into the hall and approached Sarna's door. It was closed—they had left it open. The elder Donovan tried the knob, then he stooped and looked through the key hole.

"The door is locked, Mackin," he said. "Locked on the inside," he turned to one of his men. "Break it in, McGroarty," he said.

The large Irishman had to do little more than lean against the door to send it crashing into the room. The Irishman smiled. "There is nothing heavier than a ton of Irish," he said, and McGroarty grinned, but the smile and the grin both faded as the two officers stepped into the room, for Sarna's body was not there—only a little pool of blood marked the spot upon the floor outside the open closet door where the dead man's head had rested.

Terrance Donovan scratched his head, then he turned and looked anxiously at the company assembled in the doorway. A wide-eyed, terrified woman stood was asking, hysterically, "What up?" addressed Donovan, whose men groaned were on edge by the curious happenings in the pastimes of mystery.

"I don't," replied the girl. "Is ever I been through this night, I quit. The house is haunted. I've not to right along. The house I've heard—my good?"

"What means have you heard?" demanded Lieutenant Donovan.

"Footsteps at night when I'd be a-cosin' home late. I'd run off the way up stairs as fast as I could go. I'd I got scared to go out at night."

"Footsteps when?" asked the officer.

"In those rooms where there wasn't nobody as 'tween on that floor usually. This floor's the worst."

"What's you ever tell anyone about 'em?" pursued Donovan.

"Sure! Didn't I tell Mr. Graves he'd a doom timer?"

"What did he say?"

"He said I was just a nervous little girl afraid of the dark—that it was all my imagination. Imaginations! I suppose poor Mr. Thorne's little down stairs there died, or imaginations. But the how-does-man-see-it go on? Look in door or window—I suppose he's imagination, too. My good!"

Dorcas turned to the others. "If you would feel safer together," he said, "you may go to the library and remain there the balance of the night—it will not be long now until daylight. There the officers all around the parlour—you will be perfectly safe there."

"I wouldn't go back to my room alone if you'd stir me up the 'Tobaccoes Father,'" said the house maid. The others appeared to feel similarly, for they moved toward the doorway and down to the library as a fortified group. There were no struggles.

CHAPTER V

The Vanishing Mr. Grosvenor

LIEUTENANT DORCAS, with Macklin and McDermott, searched the parlour from top to bottom—there was not a mouse, or chair, or cupboard that they did not investigate—but their search revealed no trace of Miss Ferns, the baron, or the lady of John Ferns. They had vanished as steadily as though they had never existed.

"It's got me," said Lieutenant Dorcas.

Macklin shook his head. "There's more explanation," he said.

"Of course there is."

"And I intend to find it. Good night, Ned, I'm going to my room again."

The older man reached into a pocket and produced a watch gun. "Take this, Macklin," he said, "you may be needed in. I found it in the library table. And I've got to read a couple of the boys up to us with you."

"What for?" demanded the young man.

"I can't be taller you, Macklin—you wouldn't understand; but I've got my own reasons, and they're good ones. I been puttin' two and two together this night—see? they don't make right either."

"I can take care of myself, Ned."

"Turn you on. That's probably what Thorne and Susan thought, too. Now look at 'em."

Macklin shrugged. "All right," he said, "but remember that I'm working on a case and tell them not to interfere with me."

"They'll be under your orders, no log."

Shortly after Macklin Dorcas entered his room the two police officers knocked at the door.

"Make yourselves at home, boys," he said as the two entered, and going to the table he brought open for them. "I don't want to talk," he said, after they had seated themselves and lighted their cigars, "I want to hear." They smoked.

Both the officers were sleepy and in a few minutes were half dozing. Macklin was listening and thinking. He was trying to figure some explanation that would account for the mysterious disappearance of two living members of the parlour and a dead man. He attempted also to believe in the stories underlying his father's recent apprehensions concerning his own safety. If Terrence Dorcas-as had known all that had occurred in the house and especially as Macklin's room there would be ample grounds for his fear, but he did not. He must learn something else, then. What was it?

Both the officers were dozing and Macklin was deep in thought when he was startled by a slight "thump" from somewhere at his right. He wheeled around, facing the two officers. Neither one of them had moved, and their deep, regular breathing attested the fact that both were asleep. In the middle of the floor, between Dorcas and one of the officers, lay a bit of paper folded into a small cylinder about which was a rubber band.

Dorcas rose and stepped quickly to the window. There was no one on any of the balconies. Then he turned to the closed door which he found still locked and the key on the outside where he had left it. He moved on tip toe to avoid arousing the officers, and then he investigated both his room and the bath. Finally he returned to the room where the policeman still slept and peered the piece of paper from the floor. As he unfolded it he appeared to find the word escape—*escape*—*escape*, but this was something different.

"Be quiet! Get out of this room. Your life is in danger," he said, in the tone of one speaking that had warned the others.

One of the officers awoke just as Macklin was studying the paper from his pocket.

"Anything wrong?" asked the policeman. "I thought someone was working 'round the house, or was I asleep?"

"You were sleeping all right," said Dorcas, "and you can go back to sleep if you want—I'll watch."

"What's that?" whispered the officer, looking at his ear.

"Somebody like someone in Ferns's room," explained Macklin in a low tone, at the same time moving cautiously toward the door.

The sound they had heard was a subdued cracking noise. Against the silence of the night, and coming as it did from the secret room in which death had been awarded, it indicated an impression of movement that made both men shiver, listened though they were to dangers and mysteries. Roland Dorcas came the policeman and the former laid his hand upon the knob of the door the other officer approached.

Observing their silence and their steady movements as a glance he made and followed that with equal quiet. Together the three crept not into the hallway and moved noiselessly toward Ferns's door, which stood open as it had since McDermott had

breath in his. Macklin was in the lead. He had reached the frame of the door and was on the point of looking into the interior of the room when a figure stepped aside to open the hall. Instantly Macklin stood still—it was Greene.

THE butler was evidently surprised, but he remained cool. "Beg pardon, sir," he said, "I did not see you."

"No," said Danvers, sarcastically, "but I saw you. I've been looking for you, Greene."

"Oh, leave me, sir!" exclaimed the butler, in his best official tone. "I am very sorry, sir. I have been in my room."

"You're a damned liar, Greene," exclaimed Danvers.

"Yes, sir!" replied the butler. "I was just looking for you, sir. You must not return to that room," and he pointed along the hall toward Macklin's door.

"Why?" demanded Danvers.

"It is not safe, sir."

"Why is it not safe?"

"I cannot tell you, sir, but please believe me, it is not safe," and then he turned to the officers. "Do not allow him to return to that room, I beg of you," he cried. "Even if you should find him he will be a dead man within five minutes after he crosses the threshold."

Macklin Danvers stood staring at the butler closely. The man was evidently very much in earnest, but what entirely puzzled the young man was Danvers' last statement—the gang wanted to keep him out of that room for some purpose or reason and they were trying to frighten him out first by this tale and now by means of Greene. Well, he wouldn't be frightened. He was sure the butler was out of his head and that his clothing was soiled here and there with dirt and tobacco.

"Where have you been all night?" he demanded suddenly.

"According to my duties," responded the butler.

"Good night, you are a liar."

"Yes, sir."

"Where is Miss Moran?"

"Is she not in her room, sir?"

"Where is that? Answer me!"

"You will pardon me, Mr. Danvers, but I have some other duties to attend to. I must be going," and he turned toward the stairs leading to the upper floors.

"No, you don't!" cried Danvers, and grabbed for the man.

Greene dodged him and started to run.

"Grab him!" cried Macklin to the officer who was nearest the butler.

The two lawmen jumped in front of the butler and held out both pointers hands to stop him. It was a foolish move, for it left his chin exposed; but that was what he expected a middle-aged butler to be so rough. Greene struck the policeman over without even pausing and as the latter clumped to the floor the butler slipped across his body to the stairway.

Just as he turned into it Macklin drew his gun and fired, at the same time keeping in pursuit with the second policeman at his heels. Macklin fired again as he reached the foot of the stairs and saw Greene disappearing at the very last step up. Danvers was young and ardent. He went up those stairs three or four at a time, but when he reached the top Greene was nowhere to be seen.

Followed by the officer, Danvers ascended a run to the fourth floor—to Greene. He searched every apartment door and even tapped the walls that led to the roof, but this was wasted upon the inside, precluding the possibility that Greene had escaped in this way, even had he had time to do so in the short interval of his head race with Danvers.

CRISTFALLEN, the two men returned to the third floor and waited a thoroughly. They were joined there by Terrence Danvers and McGowery who had been attracted by Macklin's shooting. Young Danvers narrated the incidents of the last few moments to his father. "He just vanished—that was all—vanished," he concluded.

Danvers never contained his head. "As I've said about forty times this night, Mack, it's got me, and I've been twenty-two years on the New York police force and I've seen some funny things. If I hadn't pounded my walls tonight and if I've seen more all the beds all the landladies I'd say the place was full of phony pencils but a mark—every wall is full of every other one—there isn't so as space nowhere. And then, too, boy, I've even poked off the lamp and branch of the policeman and the room and the door, and there's no space underneath her. And there's no way into the room below. Yes sir—it's got me."

"It's getting the too," said his son, "but I'm going to stick with it."

"You keep out of that room, though," said his father. "Don't come down to the library with the others."

Macklin shook his head. "I'll go in the room across the hall from mine—that's not being used," he said.

"There isn't any of us being used except the library," remarked the lieutenant with a smile, "you can take your choice of a lot of rooms—but I wouldn't care to search, myself."

"Not I," said Macklin, "there's something funny about that room."

Together they descended to the second floor. "On your way down turn the light on the landing on Dad," said Macklin. "I want to lean up here in the dark for a while."

"Keep to your room," continued his father.

"If it's dark they can't see me to harm me and I can listen from my doorway without being seen," explained Macklin.

"All right," agreed his father and walked down the hallway toward the stairs leading to the library while Macklin and the two officers turned toward the room opposite that which young Danvers had escaped.

Blacklin turned off the remaining hall light leaving the second floor in utter darkness, then he entered the room with the policeman, switched on the light there long enough for them to find chairs and then switched them off again. Before their eyes could become accustomed to the darkness, he increased the room to the door and stepped out into the hall, making no note, in equal silence by contrast to the door of the room he had formerly occupied.

Strikingly he turned the back and opened the door. The darkness within was solid except for the two eye-transparent spaces that were the window-areas that were but faintly visible against the deeper darkness of the room. As he moved just inside the door hesitating, he thought that he discovered something moving on one of the balconies—just a vague suggestion of a figure without definite form or shape. It revolted his attention and held his eyes. Very softly he reached behind him and closed the door, knowing that one of the officers in the room across the hall, missing him, might switch on a light that would be sure to arrest him searching there in the doorway.

Drawing his pistol he moved slowly forward toward the window—each by each he moved, fearing that the slightest noise might frighten away whatever haunted his balcony. He had crossed to about the middle of the room, when, without warning the narrow ledge of a flashlight beam from the closet fell upon the window instead where he had been expecting. Blacklin Dawson came up standing with a gasp as his eyes rested upon what the beam of the flashlight revealed beyond the window—a face peered close against the pane—the face of Simon, the dead man, with the blood upon his forehead.

Almost instantly the face vanished toward the left and then the flashlight swung slowly about the room, coming closer and closer to Blacklin Dawson. The first surprise was so free—there was something to go wrong about the scene and the warning inevitableness of that gray light searching him out in the darkness of the chamber of mystery. Then he sought to keep ahead of it, but as last it drove him into a corner where he backed and held his pistol steady. An instant later the light touched his face and stopped upon it, blinding him. Then it was that he raised his weapon and fired point-blank into its fiery eye. Instantly the light disappeared.

A moment of silence was followed by a rapid coaching sound, coming, apparently, from the corridor at the door—the silence again. Dawson sprang through the darkness for the closet door. Fumbling for the knob, he found it; but the door was locked, and the key, which had been on the outside, was gone.

CHAPTER VI

The Mystery of the Closet

SLIGHTLY bewildered by the rapidity with which the events of the past few moments had followed

one another, and faced by the perplexible mystery of the weird light that had blazed through the pane of a locked door, Dawson hesitated briefly as he sought to adjust his reasoning faculties to the improbabilities of the facts that confronted him, and select a plan of action.

Long since had the staff of duty merged with an ever mounting urge to discover the fate of the whereabouts of Warren Simon, and to determine definitely her connections with the pleasure, that he might fix her responsibility as the matter of the murder at Mason Thorne and the attempt upon his own life. Just how far she was involved with Gooven and Simon he could not know, and now the shooting of Simon had helped to upset whatever theories he had constructed to maintain relations in the connection existing between the shots.

If Gooven and Simon had been in league with one another, and there was no doubt in Dawson's mind but that they had been, it seemed unlikely that Gooven should have shot Simon, while the conclusion that Warren had been guilty of the murder of her father was impossible of abandonment.

Who, then, had shot Simon? If Mr Simon died! The fact that he had been shot and recognized his face at the window but a moment since, would have, under ordinary circumstances, settled that question definitely, but the circumstances of the past few hours had been anything but ordinary.

Where was Warren? If Simon were not dead, it was reasonable to assume that if he could find him, he could find Warren, also, since the most natural conclusion would place father and daughter near one another. But where to search for them? They had not left the Thorne building, yet they were not in the Thorne pleasure. Already had the place been searched until there remained no unvisited hiding place where even a cat might have concealed itself successfully from the prowlers. There remained but a single feasible conclusion—all others were preposterous, untenable, varying upon the demerits!

Some judgment assured him that Simon was not dead—that the face he had seen at the window must have been the face of a living man, and that that man was John Simon. The thing to do, then, was to follow.

He walked quickly across the room, toward the window, and stepped out upon the balcony. The apparition, or the man-whichever it had been, had disappeared to the left, so toward the left Dawson looked. There first lay was the balcony before the windows of the dining room and both beyond that, at smaller intervals, the balconies of the adjoining rooms. Before was the small garden between the rear of the guest-house and the landing deck of the shipwreck, whereas raised two ships—the police ship and the Thorne ship. Nowhere, upon the balconies now in the garden, was anyone in sight, though he knew that directly beyond were the policemen guarding the building's exit.

Strikingly, that he might not attract the attention of the officers, Dawson climbed over the hand-rail

and stopped in the next balcony. There he paused for a moment, listening. He heard nothing other than the subdued night noises of the city from far below. A pale ray lit from the open window, a pale search-light sweeping the sky in constant grandeur.

Cautiously he made his way to the nearest balcony. The window being open it was wide open. Within was darkness and silence. He threw a log over the sill and drew himself into the narrow, shallow. His feet dropped softly on the floor and he stood erect. Early he entered the room was not unoccupied. Of this he had nothing proved immediately. From out of the darkness at his left came a low toned whisper.

"Go back!" it warned. "In the name of heaven, go back before they kill you!"

For just a moment, Donawa hesitated, then he turned and moved quickly across the room in the direction from which the voice had come. He walked with his left hand extended before him, in his right his scuffle gun.

"Who are you," he demanded, "and who will kill me?"

"Be at!" warned the voice. "They will hear you."

Before him a closed door opened, and he passed blindly into an empty corridor. It was lit with a dim radiance, seeming to glow from the very walls. Advancing cautiously, he listened, his weapon ready. The voice was no longer in evidence.

"Who is here?" demanded Donawa, his hair crawling on his scalp. "Where are you?"

There was no answer.

Donawa rapped with his knuckles sharply at the walls, but they were solid all around. His knuckles gave back no hollow sound, only muffled solidity of stone. Several coats of armor might his eyes. In the old place then still permeated the place, like a mist of other-worlds, out of them seemed to come with a light all its own. He studied up, touched it. It seemed loose. He grasped it and pulled.

Instantly he let go. All about him a weird blue light shone, and in strange crawling noise came. A second, then it was gone, and he was plunged once more into darkness. Behind him the closed door was closed, and he looked heavily against it before he explored the fact. Presumably he believed, ready for a trap, and his hand stuck to the knob.

The door was not locked. It opened under his thumb.

Simultaneously a door at the far end of the room opened, revealing the figure of a large man silhouetted against the doorway of a lighted room across a hall across the hall, a room that was not in the Theropod suite. A strange room!

"Is that you, Donawa?" demanded the man in the doorway.

Beyond him Donawa caught a glimpse of several men and a woman, seated or standing about a table. At the first question of the man in the doorway, these men were facing him looked up, while the woman,

whose back had been toward the door, turned around. Masha Donawa caught but a fleeting glimpse of her face, as at the very instant that she turned a hand reached out of the darkness and powerful fingers seized his arm. He was pinned violently backward. His head was wrenched from his grasp and he heard the loud voice of the man in the doorway saying: "Answer me, damn you, or I die!"

Then a door closed behind him and there came to his nose, slowly, the muffled sigh of a man's breath. He tried to grapple with the man who was dragging him along, half backward, through the darkness, but the man was very powerful and the whole machine halted but a moment before he let himself swing violently around and pushed heavily forward into the dark, where he stumbled and then opened his eyes to the floor.

As he fell two thoughts entered his mind—the one was that he was, he very quiet for the purpose of discovering his assailant into the belief that he was mistaken, that he might thus take advantage of the other and overpower him—the other was the explanation that the woman he had met in that very lighted room that seemed to exist at some other space was Ninaa Soren.

It seemed to him that he had scarcely fallen before he heard footstep on floor at him, retreating toward him. He tossed a door fly open, and with the click of an electric switch the door room was flooded with light. He leaped to his feet and to grapple with his assailant and as he faced them he stood in each of amazement and stopped back in utter astonishment. They were the two police officers whom he had left but a few minutes before. He was in the closet of the room from the window of which he had stepped a minute or two since. And behind him where had been a door through which he had just been thrust was a blank wall. The policeman looked at him.

"What happened?" asked one. "We thought we heard a scrap going on in here."

"No," replied Donawa, his mind whirling. "I was just looking for something in the dark and stumbled into this closet."

Donawa moved toward the hallway. Through the pall of mystery a light was breaking. What it would reveal he could never even guess, yet that it would discover several things seemingly comprehensible occurrences seemed probable, and it might lead to complete revelations. It might also lead to deeper mystery, and there was even a greater chance that it might lead to death; but that was a chance that every man in the service expected to be called upon to face in the panorama of duty.

In only one respect did the plan forming in his mind disturb the straight path of duty, and that lay in his determination to carry it through alone, without demanding the fact that he might require the co-operation of an ample force of police to assist him. The passion he felt for Ninaa Soren prompted him to formulate his plan in secrecy and carry it out alone.

Whatever she might be, however guilty of attempts upon his life, love demanded that he give her every chance, and that he could not accomplish if he shared his suspicions with the police, even though one of them were his father, for the best of policemen appear to assume of those under suspicion as guilty until proven innocent.

If he led them, as he believed he could, to her hiding place, they would arrest her with the others, and all would be thrown into jail. He must, if possible, first discover the degree of her guilt. If he found her guilty, he assured himself steadily, no consideration of love would deter him from carrying on along the straight path of duty.

As he moved toward the doorway one of the officers pointed at the door behind him.

"There's your gun!" he said. "It must have dropped out of your pocket when you did the trick."

"Yes," agreed Donovan, as he turned and recovered the weapon, still further startled by the fact of its return to him.

In the hallway he met his father coming from the third floor, and called him aside. "I think I've seen something," he whispered in a low tone. "Don't ask me any questions. I'll tell you what I want and then you tell me if you'll do it."

"Shoot," said Lieutenant Donovan.

"I want every light above the first floor shot off and a stiff order that will let anyone who may be hanging out believing that all of you have gone down there. You should post three or four men in the hall, in the dark, and have one close to each of the doors on this side—mine, Susan's and her daughter's, with orders to catch anyone who comes out unless they give a counter-sign that we'll agree upon."

"How can anyone come out when there ain't nobody in any of these rooms?" demanded TERENCE DONOVAN.

"I don't know," replied his son. "That's what I want to find out. The counter-sign can be *Three Gringos*. Whichever and all your instructions to your men—of walk over last one of 'em, three walks."

"What are you going to do?" asked the father.

"Never mind—I told you not to ask me any questions."

The older man shook his head. "Watch," he said. "There's something about all this night's business that I've got a hunch is looking up with something I can't tell you about yet. If I'm right it's all got more to do with you than it has with Susan. There. I wish you'd get out of this house and go home. I'll send a couple of the boys with you."

Young Donovan laughed. "I supposed you'd leave," he said to his father, "but I wish you'd do it, Maikin. I don't think your life's safe here."

The younger man placed a hand affectionately on his father's shoulder. "Don't worry, Dad," he said, "I can take care of myself, and even if I can't, you don't want a son of yours running away from his post, do you?"

Lieutenant TERENCE DONOVAN stared slowly away. "The light'll be out in the next point in two minutes," he whispered, "or God be with you!"

In less than the brief time he had stipulated the upper floors of the penthouse were in darkness, and Lieutenant Donovan with several of his men were descending in the first floor with considerable show of noise, so that any listener might think a greater number were descending than actually were. Behind him he left three busy policemen silently guarding three doorways in the darkness of the second-floor hallway. What had become of Maikin Donovan, he did not know.

CHAPTER VII

ARMED SQUAD

DONOVAN stood still until after the lights had been extinguished, then he crept noiselessly through the darkness toward the room where he knew lay the road to that strange place of a world within a world, of rooms where no rooms were in this solid real world of which he now was a part. He opened it and entered softly, his gun ready. The closed door he found closed, and he bent double as he laid a hand on the knob.

It was like phying a hand on the knob of a door that led to infinity. Beyond was a space no more than four feet square, and yet, it opened into an unseen universe. But where?

MARTIN KATZ was there, and where else was, he wanted to be, to prove to himself at least, his innocence or his duplicity. Whichever it was, he must know the truth.

Altogether he turned the knob and opened the door. The interior of the closet was black as ink. No dim blank radiance now, of a world encompassing world. No ghostly radiance from nowhere. An eerie sense of appalling danger gripped him as he crept toward it in step over the threshold. Was anyone lying there, ready to kill? But he reasoned it was just as dark to anyone else, and if they were there he had an equal chance.

He stepped forward, waved a hand about—down with all that! The closet was empty. He released the post-up latch on his lungs and closed the closet door behind him. Then his searching fingers sought the hinges on the wall. He found one, rested his fingers lightly upon it, his body suddenly still. There, heavily his hand, lay the unknown. Some weird device should spring out as he pulled it down.

Nothing, he pulled suddenly. Nothing happened. The hinges did not move. No danger then, but the real thing. He felt for another, found it, and more noise pulled it down. It gave, and abruptly the wound blue light sprang forth. A second of time he had to observe it, hear its uncanny quaking sound, then it winked out. As simple, as quick as that!

After now, for action, he turned to the door—But

to looked sharply as he heard muffled voices from beyond. They seemed his enemy, as though more than one door were open. As slowly he turned the knob and opened the door a fraction of an inch. The voices went louder here, raised in altercation. But the room beyond was dark and empty.

Opening the door wide, Donovan advanced across the room, conscious of no alarm-bells. Remark his foot was on a step, as had been the case beyond the door of the room he should have been in. It was a bare floor uncarpeted at once.

He found a door, ajar, leading into a hallway, and slipped through it. Here was light, too, coming from a crack through several windows and a partly unfastened glass wall. Peeking a window he gazed out in all surrounding vicinity. Would a glimpse of the broader roof top of the Thurn building, the garden beneath the tiny balconies, give him a clue as to the location of these rooms and halls?

Not at the night that met his eyes. He gazed about Thurn now a roof-top, but a strange one. And beyond its eaves was New York, as he had always seen it, with its great skyscrapers. A mile away loomed a giant one—and his brain, linked within him as he recognized it. It was the Thurn Building! "Good God!" he whispered.

He, Marklin Donovan, had been translocated in an instant of time, across a mile of space, to the twin tower he had looked upon so many times already that night! Incredible! Instantaneous occurrence! What weird mystery was back of it all? What great thing had he stumbled upon? No petty attempts at a milkman's escape; this, but something colossal, something far ahead of the notions of even the great city on the coast.

The best of happy voices broke through his amazement now, and he realized with a start what his mission was. Here, in this giant building of mystery was Morris Barrow. And somehow he knew now, the way a hypnotist finds, in the grasp of strange sciences.

He came to a door. Beyond it were the voices. He listened.

A MAN was speaking—the voice was coarse and unrefined. He spoke in the American tongue. Young Donovan understood it well and he was glad now that his father had insisted upon his learning it. He had never understood why so much stress had been laid upon language in his education—he did not understand now. He merely was glad that he had learned American as well as French, Spanish and German.

"There is a queer fellow in it," the man was saying. "Oh! There developed the secrets of the profoundest in others," suggested a second voice. "What you know, is very possible and would explain much." At the sound of the second voice Donovan sensed his opportunity. For he recognized the tones—they belonged to George.

There was some grumbling, as though of dissent from the suggestion, and then the first voice spoke

again. "This girl—how long have you known her, Sam?" There is something about her that reminds me of someone else. Are you very sure of her?"

"You ought to be sure of me—I have been working with you for more than a year," said a feminine voice. It was Harriet.

"The Commission recommended her," said a man's voice—Samuel. "Suggested that I know nothing of her. Until tonight I have had no reason to mistrust her. But now! My God, someone is double-crossing me—someone tried to kill me. She is the only one who could have had a motive."

"What motive?" demanded the great voice of the first speaker.

"The fool is in love with her."

There was a long silence and then, suddenly, an exclamation from her at the door was heard. There was the scraping of a chair and other sounds indicative of a person rushing swiftly to his feet. Donovan leaped and glided in the door to the left, reaching, as he thus concentrated range of his vision, three of the occupants of the room.

Seated at a table, her back partially toward him, Morris James was seated, the door beyond which he knelt, upon the opposite side of the table from her. He could see two men. One of them was James, who, seated, was looking up at the man at his right—the one whose business had heard she from his chair. The latter, a coarse, hairy man, leaned forward across the table and shook a threatening finger in the face of Morris James. He appeared impatiently with rage.

Donovan could not see George, nor the other occupants of the room, if there were others, except a man's hand and part of a coat sleeve resting on the table to the right of the hairy figure. There might be a dozen men in the room, for ought that Marklin Donovan knew to the contrary, and he sincerely hoped that, however many constituted the gang, they were all in that room—it would have been most embarrassing to have had one of them come up behind him at that moment.

He wondered what it was all about—the obviously unexpressed excitement and anger of the man facing Morris James—the threatening, accusing finger—the intense silence of the others in the room. Presently the hairy man drew his voice.

"Boy!" he screamed. "I know you now!"

He turned suddenly to the right and left toward the others in the room. "You are back!" he cried. "We are all back, except. The moments have ticked so neatly. Do you not know who she is?" His voice rose almost to a shriek, as he turned upon the girl again. He leaned so far forward that his judge finger almost touched her face as he pointed it at her.

"You are Samuels' daughter?" he cried, accusingly. "That, of a," he uttered the others. "The daughter of Michael Sanders, the acknowledged war leader of the conspirators, situated far more than a year to our side made." He turned upon the girl again.

"You deny it?" he demanded.

"Have I denied it?" she asked. Her voice was level, her eyes defiant, but Donovan could see that her chest was pale.

"You know the tale of spies?" the man continued.

The girl smiled. The man forced her. "The responsibility for this is more yours than another's," he said. "Is it possible that there are two spies among us?"

"There may be two, Donald, but I am not one of them," replied Marie, whose facial muscles were working in nervous anger. "She tried me, as she did all of you, but she did not try to kill any of you. She tried to kill me, she—" he applied a steel name to her. "For the safety of the cause, she must die. Let me, then, be her executioner."

Donald held up a restraining hand. "Let the thing be carried out in order," he said. "Have you anything to say, boy?"

"What could I say to you, Donald, betrayer of the Science State's trust, murderer, explorer of your fellow countrymen's trust, that would influence you from the decision that you reached the instant that you recognized me. I am ready tonight, as I have always been, to die for America and the science empire."

"Then die!" cried Donald, flanking rapidly, and rushed to Marie.

THE latter rose and as he did so he drew a pistol from his pocket. The girl rose, too, and stood facing them laughingly, her head high. At the same instant Macklin Donovan pushed the door aside and stepped into the room just as Marie raised her weapon. The secret-service man fired first. Marie grasped at his breast, slung it forward upon the table, and then slipped to the floor.

The other occupants of the room turned surprised eyes upon the intruder—there were five men and the girl.

Donald uttered an exclamation of surprise as his eyes fell upon Donovan.

"Hi!" he exclaimed, suddenly. "It is he!"

"What?" demanded another—*not—?*

"Yes," cried Donald—"Macready!" and then "For Heaven! For the New Freedom!" he screamed and heeded his needle point.

Donovan raised his own weapon and pulled the trigger—with no result for the empty shell had passed after he had shot Marie. Simultaneously Graves drew a gun and fired, slugging Donald in his breast. Marie leaped past Macklin to the table beside the door and plunged the same into darkness. Someone grasped him by an arm as he ran and an instant later he was seized by a second person upon the other.

Donald was grinning.

A voice cried: "Stop! Stop! Kill them!"

There was the sound of heavy shoes on stone floor, and furniture pushed about and overturned. Marie's

voice shrieked as Donovan's ran.

"Come quickly!" she urged as a whisper. "You can trust me—you must trust me!" He felt himself rushed along through the darkness, turning first this way and then that.

Suddenly he felt hands take to him from out of the darkness before him as he collided with an invisible door.

"Hi!" commanded a deep voice, and then "Get into your hand here!" Heavy footsteps sounded, running. An instant of flickering, glowing blue, then more darkness. Then someone switched on light and the astounded Donovan found himself in the second floor hallway of the Thorpe apartment, a lively police-man grappling with him, while two more came running to the assistance of the first. On one side of him was Marie James and on the other, Graves.

The other who held him looked back. "Why didn't you give the counter sign?" he demanded.

Terrence Donovan, leaping up the stairs from the library three at a time, came down the hall at a run. "Hang on to them two," he ordered, subduing Graves and the girl. "Good boy, Macklin, you got 'em! That's the boy!"

"I didn't get them though," replied young Davis earnestly: "they got me."

Graves was smiling. You needn't worry about us, now, Lieutenant Donovan," he said. "He won't shoot you again—there's no more need for it."

"Oh say you won't," exclaimed Terrence Donovan, "but if I know myself, you won't. I've got you, now and I'm going to keep you."

"There's something about this, Dad, that we don't understand," said Macklin. "Graves and Miss Marie just need my help. But better we go into it my father—we've got to get the rest of the gang." He turned to Graves. "Will you show Lieutenant Donovan and his men how you got back and forth between these two buildings, so easily and so quickly?"

"Certainly, sir," said Graves, "but I doubt if you find your men now. We got the ones who escaped. The other three do not count for much—they were only inside working for hire, and, as far as I know, they have committed no crime."

"Whom tell me you, anyway?" demanded Macklin Donovan of the latter.

"But until we come back and I will tell you everything," replied Graves.

"Go ahead, then," commanded Lieutenant Donovan, "but I'll keep a good hold on you—you may be all right but you're too damned slippery to trust me!"

Graves laughed. "All right, Lieutenant, I don't know that I can blame you," he replied.

"Like you stay here and see that the women don't get away again," Terrence Donovan ordered McGahey, "the rest of you come along with us."

Graves led them into the room formerly occupied by Macklin. The door door now stood open, as the light crested after Graves had switched them on. Crowding them all into the door, the brother closed the

door and took hold of a handle at the end of the closet and pulled on it—the blue redstone flared. At that moment the door changed geometry against the door, leading them into a chamber corresponding well to the one they had left, except that it was wider. He pushed on the latch, and then an unobstructed passage

"My God!" roared Lieutenant Chivran, leaping forward and waving out of the window. "What are we and how did we get here?"

"You are in the penthouse of the tall building a mile from the Tower building," Gasser explained. "And you have just been assassinated by means of radio waves from a closet in the Tower building on this moon." The apparatus is built into the walls. An amazing science has come out of science fiction."

‘Yes’ he said slowly. ‘I have!’

The police entered the hall, entered the rooms and searched on the floors. Susan's old body lay upon the floor where it had fallen. With the exception of a few pieces of furniture, none of a lack was observed, the room was vacant and unoccupied. Officers immediately searched. He turned to Mark the Director.

"I thought David was mortally wounded," he said. "I expected to find him dead."

Doesn't he realize...? The others must have helped him to get away, but they can't be let "out" to live normally, can't?"

"You'll find a ramp door leading to the building proper," Gansner told them. "But it will be useless to follow. They've gotten away by this time. It's too late. We lost them—hey, the man, the man!"

¹ 'We beg' demanded. *Concordance Shakespeare*.

¹ In some instances, it is not possible to place a value on the time of the day.

CHAPTER VIII

Acknowledgements

A 5-Mile Drive entered the Thruway a few moments later with George, Norma and his father. He spoke pleasantly to the Glenside and its visitors. Five Thruway workers, including Miss Ephraim, crowded and weeping, was too lost in her own grief to notice anyone. George Glenside, seated in the rear, and looked in another direction, while Mrs. Penelope Glenside, looking directly through him, liked apparently to perceive either him or his substance, unless a slightly misdirected stream of her previous class seemed such to the contrary.

[illegible]

"It is strange," she whispered later to her daughter, "that the Thorns should have tolerated such people; but then poor Mamu could not have known. It is Percy's fault—the man had stolen it from his mother, his grandfather, you know had nothing—absolutely nothing. Ah, indeed said well—always! One can tell it to that Danvers person—common, very common."

She was interrupted by Lieutenant Deacon's gruff voice. "Now, Gomers," he was saying. "If you've got anything to say I want to tell you first that it may be well against you."

I continued, "visited the trailer." "In the last place, Laraine, Deanne, it may help you to understand her better than the fact of I tell you that the young lady," he indicated Miriam Baran, with a respectful inclination of the head, "is not the daughter of Deane." The wife daughter of Michael Sanders, twenty-two years ago Vice-Minister of Armenia, whom, distribution ago well, would."

Terrace Dierker's face betrayed the astonishment the statement induced.

"As you know, the *Alexander of Arcadia* was brought to America in infancy to preserve her from the winds of the revolution; she was entrusted the balance of the scorching family the day following his removal from the palace. Only Socrates and the Sonnet Ruler's tales. First Dressed, he was powerful and young wife, held the secret of the 8th century of the law.

¹ "Darius found the revolutionaries, but he kept his second world strategy: using his knowledge to ensure money from Saxons, the head of the scientists' party. For the past three years, he has been the villainous partner behind the scientists' government that has imposed America on technology and education."

² Recently the power of the socialist party has increased tremendously, until it now constitutes the hope of America and the only recourse to the external policy that has, for so long held the fate of the country in the hands of despotic hands.

The hope of the survivors lay in the young Alexander, though only a few knew that he still lived and only one witness, Michael Sanders, knew where and under what name and disguise. But David knew, too, and he has been seeking him closely.

"For this purpose Quercy and I went across to the ranch of Duane and his fellows. We learned that Duane had conceived a great ambition and as a helper in his struggle together the customers from all parties and learned them into the so-called New Freedom Party.

A very short time was planned for this month, when the pattern government was to be continued and a new one proclaimed with Diamond provincial president. The new day was to be a day of celebration, following which Diamond was to start all the work of government, any money on deposit and even himself. Secretary Bailey of Diamond's

"There was every possibility for the success of his bold play. The greatest obstacle lay in the existence of the rightful heir to the throne—Alexander would certainly on your present motion to his power. Darned, therefore, determined to snatch out young Alexander and kill him, but Darned was clever. Really, he looked no one, and made no confidants. Until tonight not even we who were closest to him realized his true intentions."

"The party consisted of many factions, all of which must be appeased. He showed, therefore, that he was coming to America to find Alexander and to prevail upon him to return to America as the first president of the new science republic, thus ensuring the confidence of both the hitherto scientists who had joined his forces and the out-and-out Freedom advocates as well."

"Narrow and I were sent by the true scientists to watch him, for Science, naturally, distrusts the man's every motive. We had the greatest difficulty in locating Alexander, due to the fact that his present calling is such that he was forced to assume an identity different from that which we were told would reveal him to us. None of us knew him by sight—not even Darned, while the young man himself is ignorant of his true identity."

"We have searched for months. Tonight we found him. Darned put the first shot yesterday morning, but said nothing to us. Narrow checked it a few minutes after Mr. Thorne was murdered, so did I, though I think Darned may have told Nance earlier on the night—that, I do not know."

"Laurieana, Darned, I do not need to tell you when the heir to the science throne is, nor the guarantee that every true American owes you for your faithful service to Science Simple. I should like to be the first to salute my fellow ruler, but there is one who better deserves that honor," and once again he turned and bowed to Nance. "As her father has given her fortune, so she has dedicated her life and vowed it money takes for the sake of the Scientists of America."

Nance smiled and motioned her hand toward Groves, then she turned to Macklin Darned, and, clasping him before him, said, her hand to his and rested it in her lap. "Oh, I adore you!" she said.

DOROVAN grasped her arm and raised her to her feet. His face was flushed with embarrassment. He drew her close to him and there, as one about her waist, he turned toward Groves.

"What is the meaning of all this story?" he demanded.

"It is the truth. Your Majesty," replied Groves. "Laurieana Darned has shown you of all that."

"I think you've all gone crazy," snarled Macklin Darned, "and swayed all the lot with you to do with the business that interests me now—who murdered Nance Thorne, and why? There is a great deal more to be explained, Groves, too. I want the history of the past few hours—not the history of America."

"Very well, Majesty."

"On the 'Majesty'?"

"Yes, Majesty, sir!" answered Groves with a smile. "Yesterday morning you were followed to, and then Lieutenant Darned's home. That was evidently Darned's first shot, that is, as to your identity. He thought you a spy employed by the scientists. When he found who you really were he told us that he had discovered that you were close to expect us to the United States Government. Of course, such a step would have absolutely ruined all his plans. He said you must be killed."

"Narrow and I tried to warn you, though we had no idea who you really were. Nance forgot the note then we slipped under your door, and that was to tell you to your death. Fearful. Thorne changed to pose through the hall at the instant you were approached and the bullet that was intended for you killed him. It was fired by Darned from Nance's room, which is also a radio-transmitter of notes."

"Nance is waiting that you were to be shot, barely posted a note of warning, passed back, through Nance's door, to the other building and thence to your door, in which there is a small lock-out panel, which opens in a dash. When you were in your dressing room, she entered the outer room and placed the note on your table when you discovered it."

"After she left your room to return to her own she heard the shot, and thought it was you who had been killed. She screamed."

"Nance, too, thought that you had been killed. Possibly he showed surprise when he discovered that it was Mr. Thorne whom Darned had murdered by mistake, for he certainly must have been surprised and shocked too, since Mr. Thorne was to have founded the state that they expected would result in giving America a new government."

"What did my father have to do with it?" demanded Percy Thorne.

"Your father was very much distressed. He thought that he was making mischief with his money, but, he was only playing into the hands of our propaganda traitors. I do not know all that they told him, but you may be sure that half or more of it was truth."

"Go on with the story of what happened here that night," directed Theodore Darned.

"Well, Nance had difficulty getting back to her room without being observed by Darned and she only did reach it just as you were about to leave the door broken in. She was sure you had been killed, Mr. Darned, and she told us that she almost betrayed herself when she discovered you alive."

"After you all went to the library she returned to the other building to watch Darned and the others. It was in the library that I met her, and that you were standing by I knew that she expected me, of Laurieana Darned, with a reality Alexander of America. I immediately returned to the other building and acquainted Nance with the facts."

"She had just learned something else from one of Darned's men. Immediately after Mr. Thorne had

been killed. Karian had gone to his room as he had most of the others and from there he had entered Mr. Donovan's room by the outer hallway and broken Mr. Donovan's north paneled beneath the mattress. Karian barely had time to reach the room and remove the weapon before the police attacked it.

"At last we determined that we must tell you of your danger, but when Karian attempted to do so in the hallway Sarah discovered her and overheard. From then on he was suspicious, and we had difficulty in even getting the truth out of him."

"Karian attempted to reach your room and take you to death with a dagger belonging to Marcus. I tried to shoot him down an upper window, but succeeded only in knocking the dagger from his hand."

"Then, a few minutes later, Karian discovered that Sarah was planning to enter your closet and shoot you from the inside panel. It was then that she shot Karian from the closet as he was about to enter it on his way to your closet."

"To that I herself she ran to Desmond and told him that one of the police had killed Karian. At that time papers on his body that Desmond did not want to tell into the hands of the police he sent men to bring Sarah's body to the other building. When they had done so it was discovered that Sarah was only stunned by a single wound, and he soon recovered."

"At the same time that Sarah was shot Desmond was in your closet willing to kill Karian. He heard the shot, feared that Karian would find you through the panel in your closet door. He did not want to enter the room of this shot, but immediately to the other building."

"The last time we warned you Sarah was on his way again to get you and Karian had to shoot the note from the closet of your room. At the same time I made my way to Sarah's room determined to find that I must tell you her to face of your great danger. It was then that you caught me."

"There is not much more to tell that you do not already know. You nearly killed Maria when you fired at the light coming from your stairs. She had been hiding there awaiting either Sarah or Desmond or both, to come upon as worth of men. She dimly discerned someone on the balcony and turned the light upon them—it was Sarah, as you know. The light frightened her away."

"Then she turned the light on you to make sure that it was you and not Desmond. When you fired at her you missed her head by inches and she retreated herself, fearing you might fire again. She had already removed the key from the outside lock by the simple expedients of reaching through the small aperture in the door—the same one through which Desmond fired and that she used to shoot the flashlight on Sarah and you."

"When you followed Sarah it was I who dragged you into the door and then pushed you to your own room in the Three continents."

"I prove that is all, Laurence," Georven concluded.

"I have tried to cover every point, and now won't you explain to—oh—er, Mr. Mappin, who he really is?"

"Wait a moment," said Tyrone Donovan. "Was so fast. A week ago I could have told him, for I thought I knew. Now I'm damned if I know. We got a letter from Michael Sanders then. It told me something about his being of a plot to assassinate Markle, and he is in with him very close as the time was almost ripe for him to return to America."

"When I read the letter on my way she finished, and when she came out of the room she suffered a stroke. She has only walked partially a couple of times since, and then she told me something that I don't know whether to believe or not, when she caught me by the arm to tell me something. She kept saying: 'I can't let him go—my little Markle, my little Markle!' And then, just as he was here, she told me that he is our son—that it was Abraham who died on the stratosphere line some time, and I always thought that it was our own boy that died."

Georven appeared disbelieving.

"Can we not go to your wife or sons and explain the necessity of knowing the truth," he asked. "The fate of America hangs in the balance—the happiness and prosperity of millions of people."

Laurence Donovan hesitated. "She is close to death," he said.

"But your promise to the Science Bakers?"

"Very well we will go," he said, "but whether we shall question my wife or not depends upon the decision of the doctor."

It was already daylight when they entered the rural town that had been summoned to take Tyrone Donovan, Georven, Karian and Markle to the bedside of Mrs. Donovan. The police lieutenant and Georven descended one of the cars, Karian and Markle the other. As they drove off Mrs. Peabody Glanville turned to Percy Thorne with a wistful smile.

"And to think!" she said "that you have been so fortunate of the future Science Bakers of America without suspecting his true identity! But really didn't you mean, Percy, his distinguished and majestic wife? Quite noticeable and very impressive."

In the second car Markle Donovan and Marcus sat in silence that was presently broken by the man.

"Believe I know who you were I told you that I loved you," he said.

"Believe I know who you were I told you that I loved you," she replied. "But now we must forget all that. You are here responsible it is."

"If I was a Baker nothing should be impossible. If I am only Markle Donovan, the son of an Irish policeman, though that will make the difference, he have could work upon it the hand of a 'The Minister's daughter'?"

"I pray to God you are only Markle Donovan, dear," she whispered, "for then I can show you how easy it is to win her."

He took her in his arms. "Prince of Science or Markle?" he said. "We're going to marry you."

